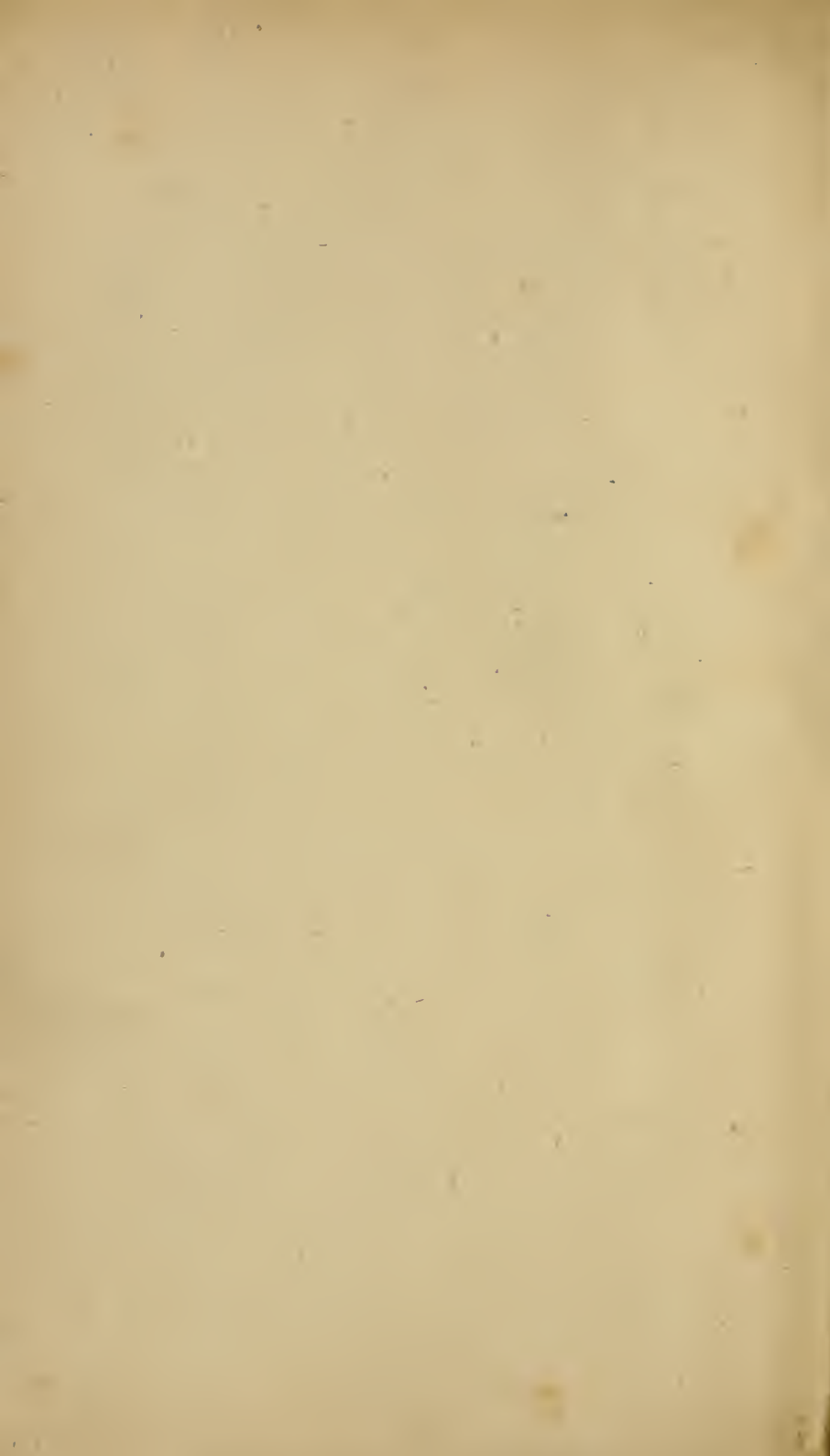




C. G. Robbins








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RECOLLECTIONS OF A PAGE

AT

THE COURT OF LOUIS XVI.



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# RECOLLECTIONS OF A PAGE

AT

THE COURT OF LOUIS XVI.

BY

FELIX, COUNT DE FRANCE D'HÉZECQUES.

EDITED, FROM THE FRENCH,

BY

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE,

AUTHOR OF

“THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE,”

&c., &c.

*IN ONE VOLUME.*

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## C O N T E N T S.

	Page.
EDITOR'S PREFACE . . . . .	vii
NOTICE TO THE READER . . . . .	1
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	9

## PERSONAGES.

CHAPTER.		
I.	THE KING . . . . .	13
II.	THE QUEEN . . . . .	24
III.	THE ROYAL CHILDREN . . . . .	31
IV.	MONSIEUR . . . . .	59
V.	THE COUNT D'ARTOIS . . . . .	67
VI.	MADAME ELIZABETH . . . . .	72
VII.	MESDAMES THE AUNTS . . . . .	78
VIII.	THE PRINCES OF THE BLOOD . . . . .	83
IX.	THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN . . . . .	89
X.	THE MARSHAL DE RICHELIEU . . . . .	99
XI.	MADAME DUBARRY . . . . .	105

## P L A C E S.

I.	THE PAGES . . . . .	112
II.	THE GUARDS . . . . .	127
III.	VERSAILLES . . . . .	137
IV.	THE PRIVATE APARTMENTS . . . . .	147
V.	THE KING'S LEVEE . . . . .	157
VI.	ETIQUETTE AND VARIOUS CUSTOMS . . . . .	165

CHAPTER.	Page.
VII. THE CHAPEL . . . . .	171
VIII. THE MAUNDY . . . . .	178
IX. CEREMONIES . . . . .	181
X. BLUE RIBBONS . . . . .	190
XI. BEDS OF JUSTICE . . . . .	195
XII. THEATRES . . . . .	201
XIII. THE QUEEN'S BALLS . . . . .	207
XIV. THE INDIAN EMBASSY . . . . .	213
XV. TRIANON . . . . .	222
XVI. THE MENAGERIE . . . . .	230
XVII. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF VERSAILLES . . . . .	234
XVIII. FONTAINEBLEAU . . . . .	239
XIX. SAINT-GERMAIN AND MARLY . . . . .	245

## MATTERS.

I. MINISTERS . . . . .	253
II. STATES-GENERAL . . . . .	265
III. THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY . . . . .	277
IV. THE FIFTH OF OCTOBER . . . . .	283
V. THE COURT AT PARIS . . . . .	296
VI. LA FAYETTE . . . . .	304
VII. THE CONFEDERACY OF 1790 . . . . .	310
VIII. THE TWENTY-EIGHTH OF FEBRUARY . . . . .	320
IX. THE KING'S FLIGHT . . . . .	327

## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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THIS is a curious book, and it has been thought worth while to give it an English dress, both because it preserves the picture of scenes that we can now hardly realize, and because of the unconscious delineation the Page gives of the feelings of the true old French nobleman.

We can imagine that honourable gentleman, M. d'Hézacques, collecting his memories of the brilliant Court, lighted up by the peculiar illumination which surrounds whatever befalls us in the years of boyhood, and further consecrated by tenderness for what had utterly passed away, and by the loyalty that sincerely believed that the old unfettered monarchy, as Louis XIV. held it, was the right and glorious thing. No doubts has he, no scruples, no objections to the cost of Louis XIV.'s buildings, no qualms about his "glories," no hesitation even in gravely calling the Court

poet, Delille, the Virgil of France, and quoting seriously a description of Marly that it is impossible to read without laughing. Thoroughly and honestly prejudiced, he is quite incapable of perceiving the motives which actuated anyone who did not maintain in its fulness the sentence with which he begins his chapter on the States-General, "I cannot fancy that any Sovereign exists who does not shudder at the very name of Diets and States-General, unless he has the will and power to rule their resolutions, and, if necessary, repress their extravagance by the power of the bayonet."

That was the way the old Frenchman liked to be governed. And that Frenchman was faithful, loyal, staunch to his country; brave to the death, an element in the first power in Europe. May be, he had a true instinct as to what was good for himself and his nation.

A good deal of ready observation, though not going below the surface, characterizes our friend. His Recollections are those of a boy of seventeen, but they preserve many curious traits of manners, and touches respecting the lives of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, for whom his regard is evidently thoroughly personal and genuine. There is something droll in the mixture of feeling which dwells on the King's "majestic" brow at the Tiers-Etat—poor Louis' retreating Bourbon head!—and yet which records the rather ungainly practical jokes for which he blames the King's "vi-



gorous temperament," such as driving a splendidly-dressed courtier up against the wet mattings hung on the balconies to cool the air. But the upshot of all he tells is, that Louis and his Queen merited the affection and respect they enjoyed from those who surrounded them in their domesticity.

Another curious point to observe is the regular fagging system in the page establishment. Modern France keeps her boys under constant inspection; ancient France seems to have let them govern themselves like English schoolboys. The high-spirited, imperious little noble, tyrant of his provincial castle, coming up to court to wear crimson velvet and gold lace, finds himself as entirely in subjection to the lad of sixteen as ever was lower boy to the sixth form, forced in like manner to conform to the laws of speech, subjected to peculiar tortures and punishments, and emerging therefrom with a fervent love for the scene of his training, and for his comrades therein. We see here something of what made the old higher French nobility so compact a body, so true to each other for good or for evil, so honourable according to their own notions, and, at the same time, so utterly alien to all outside their own world.

Thus, as his French editor observes in a note, he is utterly incapable of doing justice to La Fayette. He imputes, in good faith, motives that never entered the Marquis's head. The despair

with which the deadlock of the latter days of the monarchy filled ardent spirits is a mystery to the Page, and he absurdly imputes to personal ambition that perilous escapade which at sixteen carried the young Gilbert de La Fayette to give up all that birth and connection had lavished on him at home, for the phantom of liberty. To Hézecques the republican noble is simply a traitor to his own order, deliberately trying to play the part of Cromwell, while in fact the real man was an enthusiast, who aided to let loose a flood, and then had not force or genius to guide it, offended the violent by retaining the instincts of a humane man, and a gentleman, and found himself unable to protect the sovereign, whom he had thus virtually given up to his enemies. Traitor, in the sense of conspiring against the Crown, La Fayette assuredly was, treacherous never, and d'Hézecques' portrait of "the Grandison of the Revolution" must simply be taken as another instance of the one-sided views of partizans.

Feathers and gold lace, ceremonies and orders of precedence, the reader will find a considerable amount of them here; but if he will look at them with the eye of an antiquary, he will be interested, and he will be still more inclined to dwell on them with a certain melancholy kindness when he remembers that these are the recollections of one who lost all the best hopes of his life in the collapse of the

Court, and when he wrote, in 1804, was a member of a crushed, almost proscribed order, and was still freshly mourning his King and Queen, and most of the gay companions of his page days.

C. M. YONGE.



## NOTICE TO THE READER.

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THE lively interest of the public in the events of the later days of the Ancient Monarchy is evidently shown in the number of successful works bearing on that period lately published. I believe that the spirit of inquiry is far from being satisfied with the results of the interesting labours of MM. de Goncourt and de Lescure, in regard to Marie Antoinette, M. de Beauchesne's beautiful book on Louis XVII, and the great work published by M. Feuillet de Conches, after such numbers of memoirs and varieties of documents, but has rather gained strength. There is, indeed, a vast mass of information remaining to be examined.

Possibly these Recollections now published may be destined to take rank among those notable works, by filling up a void in the history of that time. We dare not put them forward with such pretensions, yet they may have their special use.

Private memoirs generally are of service in two ways. They throw a valuable light on history in general, if their authors start from a point of sight

of sufficient elevation for them to perceive the connexion between particular individual acts and matters of universal interest; or if their means of observation are insufficient to raise them from their position among the generality, then such memoirs are a kind of supplements to the chronicles of nations, whence may be extracted such details as are rejected by the majesty of history. They are read in the first instance for instruction, in the second for amusement. And if these private records chance to bear on a period of transition from the ancient accustomed government of a nation to novel institutions, if they afford an insight into the domestic life of the august personages who were victims of a revolution that crowned their temporal glory with martyrdom, they will do more than amuse us, and will win our hearts by the powerful aid of patriotism and of the dignity of suffering.

As that is the nature of the Recollections of a Page, we believe that they will excite sympathy and be successful.

The author of these Recollections, Charles Alexander Francis Felix, Count d'Hézecques of France, Baron de Mailly, was born on the 30th of July, 1774, at the Castle of Radinghem, in Artois. In his twelfth year, on the 1st of January, 1786, the young d'Hézecques was admitted among the number of the pages of the King's chamber. He was a family connexion of the Duke de Villequier, gentleman of the bedchamber. He was brought up in that position, and the account of his education in this post of honour of the young French nobles will

be read with great interest among these Recollections. When the pages of the bedchamber were put down in the course of the Revolution he was placed, on the 1st of January, 1790, among the list of Court equerries, and so remained till the month of April, 1791. On his retirement, the King gave him a captain's commission in the Guards. At that time the body-guard and the greatest part of the French nobility had emigrated. As a point of honour, to give proof of his loyalty to the King, the young d'Hézecques left his family home, the Castle of Mailly-Maillet, and lost no time in joining them. He went to Brussels, where he found the Duke de Villequier, and thence to Coblentz, the quarters of the body-guards, and a great number of volunteers of the first families in France who had joined them. He was not satisfied with the life of the *émigrés* at Coblentz. He was already, at sixteen, sensible and discreet, fond of books and study, wearied by idleness. Nor was he sustained by ardent political passion, with its train of illusions, like his companions in exile, being incompatible with his early age. So he took advantage of the leisure created by the position of affairs to visit some of the chief cities of Germany.

Then ensued the campaign of '92, so disastrous for the allies, at which he was present. With the exception of this campaign, and afterwards that of 1794, in which he served under his relation M. de Choiseul-Stainville, the years of his exile were spent in travelling for information through Germany, then Belgium, then again Germany. He went



through them several times, devoting himself, both while moving and stationary, to history, geography, and archæology.

Meanwhile, the French revolution had reached its ebb, after having appalled the world with its horrors and its successes, the sky cleared. On the 19th of July, 1795, he was informed that his family had just been released, after an imprisonment of sixteen months at Doullens. Banishment was a heavy trouble to Felix D'Hézecques, and he longed to see his country again. At last he returned in September, 1796, but the hoped for security did not continue for long. The events of Fructidor produced a renewal of severities towards the *émigrés*. His situation became so perilous that he was obliged to go into exile again, after remaining concealed at Amiens in his family mansion in the Rue Porte-Paris for eighteen months. There was no room for doubt as to the fate that awaited him, if unhappy enough to be captured. Several of his comrades in arms, such as de Ménars and d'Olliamson, had been shot. Domiciliary visits were more numerous, but thanks to the good spirit that always existed in Amiens, the proscribed was always warned. He found means to reach Rotterdam, and remained till the 18th Brumaire, when the gates of France were opened to the banished.

During these long years spent in foreign lands, Felix d'Hézecques had full time to follow the march of events, to study the change of spirit that had taken place during the course of the great revolution by which Europe had been convulsed, and to



form his mind to notions of wise liberality in accordance with the feelings and needs expressed by new France. Travel, reading, and observation had produced thought. So he submitted to the new order of things without needless difficulty. In 1804 he entered the service under the banner which had become that of France; in 1813 and 1814 he commanded the Legion of the Somme, forming part of the army of operations as the National Guard of the Northern departments. It took a noble share in the heroic campaign in France, and in this final supreme effort to repel the shame and misery of invasion, Felix d'Hézecques fought to the last at the head of his legion forming part of the division Allix.

This was the termination of his military career. The remainder of his life, under the Restoration and the Monarchy of July, was spent in the exercise of honourable administrative functions, when the good faith, frankness, moderation, and amenity of his disposition gained him the esteem and affection of all. He died in the month of August, 1835.

The reader can now see, without the necessity of our dwelling on it, what this book may be and what credit it deserves.

M. Felix d'Hézecques drew up his Recollections in 1804, at an age when his mind was matured without any loss of memory, so they must generally be referred to that date, while the author has made additions to the original compilation, some of which evidently date from the Restoration.

There need, therefore, be no surprise at these small discrepancies, which are a kind of stamp of genuineness of the work.

These Recollections are those of an honest man, without prejudice, except for truth-telling. They are written unpretentiously and fairly; the author was in a good position for observation. If his views were unavoidably the narrower, and his field of observation contracted, by his extreme youth, there are some counterbalancing advantages. It enabled him to see the better whatever his youth permitted him to see, and he picked up much that he would have omitted or neglected in more mature years. Thus he was naturally especially struck with the exterior of things, the usages of the court, the ceremonials and gaieties, the furniture, &c., and on these heads gives abundance of detail that inquirers would have a long search for, and sometimes in vain, elsewhere.

Though we have spoken above of his desire to be always true and fair, and of his perfect good faith, the reader must not expect to find in him the equity and moderation that are now difficult enough, but were then impossible, in appreciation of facts, and especially of persons. His opinions respecting the men of the Revolution are those of a page of Louis XVI., those of his position and period. Several details have been too easily received, and should be corrected, as well as judgments softened. This has been done in some instances in notes which might have been multiplied. The reader will have no difficulty in making his

own additions. Besides, these observations are not important; considering the author's age and position, they can hardly be his own. Far other is the weight of his firm and solid testimony in favour of Louis XVI. and the unfortunate Marie Antoinette. There active personal feeling is to be found, which would not have been so acute unless general in the King's and Queen's circle of intimacy.

The Recollections of a Page of Louis XVI. are only a portion of those left by M. Felix d'Hézacques to his family. He has also written "Recollections of the Emigration." We possess the originals of both works. If the present volume should, as we hope, be favourably received by the public, we shall gain encouragement to offer the "Recollections of an Emigré" at a future time.

COMTE D'HÉZECQUES.



## INTRODUCTION.

Quod vidi pinxi.

**D**OUBTLESS it will be said, with truth, that remembrances come too late when they are gathered up after their first bloom is lost by length of time. But there is advantage in the delay, for perhaps things will be more interesting from the light thrown upon them by after-knowledge of the events for which they themselves were the preparation and the results they induced. Within a very short time I was witness of more misfortunes, catastrophes, and extraordinary events than are often seen during a long life; but while the wonderful events that took place before my eyes necessarily left a deep and lasting impression on my mind, my extreme youth at the time prevented my forming an accurate judgment of each, as they were so obscure and involved. I am now in a better position to weigh them. It is now no longer necessary, as it then was, to search out the inmost recesses of the breast for the discovery of the object of each individual action, or each person's private motive; the veil is torn away, the tragedy played out; each side has taken off the mask, each person

played out his part, closed upon the scaffold in the case of many of the chiefs.

Besides, I am not writing a history, but a simple record of some usages and some anecdotes of the Court of Louis XVI., and also an account of several notable days during which I had the honour to be present in person. I have not even attempted to arrange these Recollections in any sort of order. Facts will, therefore, be crowded together, for I shall only mention what fell under my own observation; at all events, the most perfect accuracy will be found here, and if the indulgence of some story, not resting on an entirely sound foundation, be allowed, it shall never occur without previous warning to the reader.

Now that the ancient court is gone, and old institutions have crumbled under the scythe of time and forcible revolutionary attempts, the detail of ceremonies and etiquette, habitual in times left so far behind us, will be read with interest. These ancient customs were prolonged from age to age around the august personages who successively received the royal crown on their brow. Nearly all Frenchmen, at least once in their lives, desired to be witnesses of the stateliness of the court and the splendour of Versailles, and returned home, gratified at having received some rays of the brightness that reigned in that magic abode. Every one had more or less of stories to tell, but now all is gone. New men rise, and new customs are produced with a fresh dynasty, and those of the reign of Louis XVI. seem to many people even now to be of the

Middle Ages. Interest will always attach to a King and a noble family the leaders of a large and powerful empire, and more than ever now when their misfortunes are known, and they have been seen to fall from the pinnacle of grandeur to the lowest depths of human misery, by a descent rapid and terrible in proportion to their elevation.

Indeed, was there ever a time more crowded with events than the five or six years I passed at the court? Foreign princes came thither from all lands, not so much to admire the magnificence which was already on the wane as to obtain a personal knowledge of the King's goodness, and the sweet majesty of his comrade. Even from the banks of the Ganges came one of those embassies which hardly occur more than once in a century, and are so rare that they intensely excite curiosity, and are the subject of general conversation for a long time.

If political events are wanted, we shall see a generous King sincerely desirous of his people's good in opposition to the principal bodies of the kingdom, and making, in his Beds of Justice, an exhibition of all the authority and grandeur that remained to him. These imposing ceremonies were always striking manifestations of the King's power. In this case they were without effect, because the magistrates, the natural defenders of the kingdom, and the very princes, born to support the throne, united to accomplish the ruin of the monarchy and the crown. Soon there was a summons for the wisest of the wise from all parts of the kingdom, the notables of every province; they only brought



the spirit of the *Fronde* ; and far from assisting to sustain their country, only helped to prepare its ruin, sapping royal authority, and digging the abyss in which themselves were to be engulfed. Next appear the States-General, always the centre of dissensions of more or less gravity, and at that moment seeming to give the signal for frightful disorders. Immediately on their meeting, and subsequent to it, occurred those scenes of horror worthy of American savages, examples of the excesses into which a restless people may be betrayed when they have trodden under foot their religion and their law. Without entering on the history of these various events, mention will be made of what came under my own observation, as also of some notable men of the former reign, whom I knew in their decline ; and I shall name others who were overthrown in the outset of their career. The principal residences of the King will remind me of anecdotes and facts, and in relating them I shall, by vindicating the truth, have occasion to unmask the hideous calumny that has for several years dripped its venom on an illustrious and unhappy family, whose hateful plottings were supported by the servants, and even the relations, of its august victims. I can show Louis XVI. in domestic life, free from those vices that have been attributed to him, and shall borrow what was beyond my own observation from irrefragable testimony. To conclude, *truth* is the motto of my work, and I draw what I have seen.

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## PERSONAGES.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE KING.

“Much spoken of, but little known.”—HENRIADE.

WHEN the shafts of calumny are once directed upon the actions of any man, they cannot be turned back by the most irreproachable conduct. Thus did Louis XVI. suffer. His upright principles, the motives of his actions, his virtues, his very kindness, were all misinterpreted. All the responsibility of whatever took place was laid upon him; and there were even attempts to accuse him of the foulest crimes and depravity. Neither need anyone fancy that these attacks arose only from a regicide party inimical to all social rank; most came from those men who were in fact adherents of the monarchy, covered with benefits, who destroyed it in the person of the sovereign.

Louis XVI was a good king; unhappily he lived at a time when his very virtues were likely to drag him to his fall, and when the faults imputed to so many sovereigns, from which he was perhaps too

free, might have saved the monarchy, and preserved himself from his mournful fate. And while making the admission that he was not without faults, is there any reason why they should not be recognized as arising from valuable qualities? And the good qualities of the occupant of a throne should, with equal reason, have a still greater right to the respect they obtain if found in a private person. In real justice, it must be said that the weakness of Louis XVI. especially arose from his kindly spirit, and his throne would not have been overturned had he possessed the tenacious and determined will of a despot. Besides, he has given an example of superhuman courage and resignation under the most astounding disasters mentioned in history.

Of a bashful disposition, the effect of a neglected education, this prince was also endowed with such kindness of heart that he, in a selfish age, never, not even in moments of peril, allowed his personal interests to weigh in comparison with those of his subjects. Badly advised, he never could see that every attack on the King's majesty rebounded upon the monarchical system, and that the glory and happiness of the kingdom depended on the glory of its representative. Thence arose the numerous conjunctures when the rightful shedding of a little blood might have saved us from so many troubles, but Louis XVI. preferred risking his own life to endangering the safety of a single man—remarkable conduct condemned by politicians, but admired by philanthropists.

As a private person, Louis XVI. would have been

a model man; and none have a right to blame him for weakness that they all contributed to enhance in him by most timid counsels. All of us, whatever we are, Frenchmen of all classes, we contributed more to our misfortunes than he did; we were the authors of them. A day will come, but a generation must pass, when the virtues of this prince will be weighed at their proper worth; the admiration of our grandchildren, and their altars of expiation, will offer a tardy but notable reparation of the injustice and scandal of the persecutions he endured.

Louis XVI. was thirty-two when I was presented to him. He had been weakly in youth, but his constitution had improved so much that he was one of the most healthy men in the kingdom. His vigour, the result of a temperate, regular life, was increased by the varied exercise necessary to his health, and was visible at every point. His stoutness of person, which was often attributed to feebleness and indulgence, far from being an injury to his appearance, gave him a dignity of carriage that he never possessed while Dauphin. When seated on the throne, Louis XVI. was not wanting in personableness, but, when on foot, it is true that he had an unpleasant waddle, like all the rest of his family, and it was enough to gain him the bad opinion of some empty men who, in this vaunted age of light and wisdom, persisted in judging of their sovereigns by the outside, and neglecting the qualities of the mind.

Louis XVI. had well-formed but very thick legs; his face was agreeable, but his teeth were so irregular

as to make his laugh ungraceful. His eyes, never truly rendered by any painter, notwithstanding the light colour noted by the world by the name of the king's eyes, were gentle, and had a kindness that was not evident at first, for his short sight prevented any openness in his glance. He had no exclusive pursuits, and refreshed himself by hours of study after violent exercise. He was a prodigious reader; it is known that a few days before his death he reckoned up the number of volumes perused during a captivity of four months, and found they came to more than two-hundred-and-fifty. It was by real hard work that he gained an intimate knowledge of the laws of the realm and the history of different nations, of geography to great perfection, and even became an accomplished man of letters by the study of several foreign languages. His translation of Horace Walpole's Richard the Third from the English is well known, and is a meritorious performance. All his powers were due to himself alone. And yet this is the prince who is always held up to us as ignorant, brutal, and a confirmed drunkard.

I spent nearly six years at the Court, and I never saw the King in the smallest instance act rudely by the most humble of his servants. His constitutional vigour made his proceedings rough, and what he only meant for a slight joke would sometimes leave somewhat painful traces; but he would have denied himself any fun if he could have supposed it capable of giving the slightest pain.

Every evening for six years, I or my comrades

saw Louis XVI. retire to bed in public. This ceremonial was never broken, but on some occasions of illness, or days of trouble and sorrow. The King often rose from the supper-table with members of his hunt who had not exercised his own temperance, but I never saw him more elevated than usual, and always heard him converse with the same freedom and coolness. And yet there are men who even came into very close contact with him, that have represented him as half his time unable to stand upright; but they were blind or treacherous. Truth had no weight, reports were spread and made their mark, conspiracy advanced.

When the King had been hunting at Rambouillet, he had his supper there and returned very late at night. He would arrive half-asleep, with his legs stiff, dazzled by the glare of the candles and torches, and find it hard to mount the stairs. The servants, who saw him with the notion of his debauchery already in their heads, thought him excessively drunk; while, when within his own rooms and recovered from his sleepiness, he would begin to converse and talk of his hunting, with details that we thought very tedious at three o'clock in the morning.

Any spectators of the King's dinners in public must be aware of his sobriety. He eat largely, for his temperament and constitution required it; but he only drank pure wine at dessert—very often a full glass of Malaga with a piece of toast, but always in proportion to the food he took. Besides, his bodily power was wonderful; I could give in-

stances that might seem puerile, but which surprised us considerably. In the chamber called the *Œil de Bœuf*, there was a shovel so heavy that it took a strong man to hold it out at arm's length. I have often seen the King perform this feat with a little page standing on the shovel as well. One of the Swiss park-keepers had kept a heavy mountain rifle by him, requiring a great deal of strength to put it to the shoulder and bear the shock of the recoil. The King had heard of it, and one day left the hunt, went to the Swiss, took the rifle, put it to his shoulder with the greatest ease, and fired it without being shaken in the least.

I never saw Louis XVI. seriously ill; some bad colds, and one attack of erysipelas which confined him for several days to his bed, were the only illnesses that he suffered from during my stay at Court; and he never wanted drugs or medicine, except on those occasions. Exercise was his usual remedy, and temperance his antidoté to any mischief.

His dress was as simple as his manners. On his accession to the throne, the Duke d'Estissac, grand-master of the wardrobe, came to take his directions for coats.

"How many suits are generally made every quarter?"

"Six, sire."

"Well, have six suits of Petersham cloth made for me."

The Duke d'Estissac represented to him that there were occasions when the majesty of the



throne required clothes of some other kind than Petersham cloth. In the morning the King dressed in a grey suit till the hour of his levee or toilette. Then he put on a dress suit of cloth, all of the same colour, very often brown, with a steel or silver sword. But on Sundays and days of ceremony, the most beautiful stuffs and costly embroideries were employed for the King's adornment. Very often, according to the taste then in vogue, the velvet suit was covered with little spangles that made it quite dazzling; added to this was the splendour of the crown diamonds. That famous, faultless stone, known by the name of the Regent, looped up the hat; and that called the Sancy was at the end of one epaulette, and used to fix the blue riband worn over the coat during great ceremonies.

The chief taste of Louis XVI. was for hunting. He took the greatest interest in it; used himself to select the meets, and kept notes of the stags hunted, of their age, and the circumstance of their capture. His only passion was for this noble amusement, and it was very needful for his health. He very often also went out shooting, and, although short-sighted, shot very well, and fired so many shots that I have often seen him come back with his face all blackened with powder. As for falconry, there was only one exhibition of it in a year, and that was a great solemnity. The King was a bad rider, and wanting in confidence. It often happened that the heavy half-boots, known as jack-boots, that he used to wear would annoy the horse, however well trained;

but a horse that transgressed with him was at once drafted from the royal troop.

The King was very far from spending his life in debauchery, or purely mechanical work ; all his time that could be spared from business and audiences was employed in hunting or devoted to study. Any one who found his way into the private chamber, for duty or curiosity, could easily convince himself of this by the number of papers and books in use strewn over the bureau, and make sure that the King's habits were very far from such idleness as persons desired to represent. It was only by way of amusement, for a few minutes' recreation and rest from strain of mind, that he would now and then forge a key or a padlock. Besides, the works that came from his hands did not display much aptitude or practice.

Geography was the subject of study that Louis XVI. preferred, accounts of travels, or anything bearing on naval affairs. When he went to Cherbourg, many naval officers were surprised at his knowledge, and several found his questions rather embarrassing. On returning from this interesting journey, flattered by the exhibitions of attachment that had been made during it, I heard the King say that he hoped to travel in the same sort of way every year, especially to the coasts, as he wished to be particularly attentive to the fleet. The misfortunes of the country prevented the execution of this project, by which the King would have learnt the errors of the Government, and the people must have gained attachment to their sovereign.



It has been ascertained that most of the King's speeches, especially those considered the most notable, were prepared by himself. Among them, his famous declaration on leaving Paris, a work remarkable for accuracy and logic. Again, he it was that gave M. de la Perouse, the famous navigator, the final sailing orders, with clear and sound recommendations that astonished him. If the conversation at the King's retiring to rest turned on geography or navigation, especially with the second tutor to the Dauphin, M. du Puget, there seemed to be no reason why it should ever stop; and the clock oftener struck one than twelve before they thought they must make an end.

Louis XVI. had no favourites. There were some elderly noblemen that had done States service, for whom he had great respect, and he had some predilection for persons of his own age who had been about him when Dauphin. Among them were the Duke de Laval, M. de Belzunce, the Chevalier de Coigny, and the Marquis de Conflans; but the only mark of favour ever shown them was in the greater frequency of invitations to hunting parties or to supper. His stakes were always of small amount when he had his hunting party to supper and played with them; they waited on him when he retired, and received the money in payment of his losses as he went through his rooms. I never saw more than about four pounds given to the Duke de Laval, who was almost always his opponent at trictrac or billiards. There were besides some young persons much patronised by His Majesty, either from their own

merits or in consideration of their fathers' services. There were the Duke de Richelieu, then Count de Chinon, and now in the Russian service; de Saint Blancart, of the family of Biron; and young Chauvelin, who had one of the best places at Court at twenty years old. This was owing to his father's fearful death at the feet of Louis XV., and he afterwards repaid the benefit with the meanest ingratitude.

Neither had the King mistresses any more than favourites; even scandal spared him on that head. A fond father and faithful spouse, his pleasure was found in the affection of his family, and the power to bear his sorrows in a firm and enlightened piety that he knew how to unite with the duties of royalty.

In the evil times of the Revolution there were many opportunities when Louis XVI. might have resumed his power by the exercise of a little energy; but he was restrained by innate dread of any possible massacre, and the fear of compromising the safety of his family and partisans, while personal risks were of no account in his eyes. It was very possible that his view was clearer than ours, and that he early recognised the Hydra of fate in the Revolution, raising a thousand heads to replace the loss of one, and saw the necessity of submission to the evil to come. Some imputed cowardice to him, but there was none of that under the iron hand of adversity. He knew how to die as a King, nobly; as a Christian, without sorrow or terror; and gave a specimen of the most lofty courage and generous forgiveness. France was

covered with shame by his death; none the less will it be one of the most brilliant pages of her history. His last desires, his last words, will ring through future ages, and command the highest admiration from posterity. To them France, doubtless, owes her glory and success—"From Heaven above, Louis XVI. forgives his wrongs, and watches over her success."

## CHAPTER II.

## THE QUEEN.

WHEN I came to Versailles the Queen was in her thirty-first year, and the full splendour of her beauty; for though she could not be called pretty, and had nothing to set her off but her majestic deportment and royal air at that period, these advantages were much enhanced since her coming to France in her fifteenth year. On Sunday, she would come out of her rooms at the end of the gallery, and go for the King on the way to mass, when the feathers of her head-dress might be seen waving above the heads of all her attendants, and in the words of Fénelon, “she was a head taller than all the ladies of her court, like a fine oak in the forest rising above the surrounding trees.” It seems that she adopted this rather haughty bearing about that time, to confound the audacious slanderers who tried to include her in a hateful accusation, and make her appear as an accomplice in an infamous swindle.

The Queen’s hair was very beautiful, of a charming fair tint, and a colour very much in fashion thirty years ago was named from it. Her nose was

rather aquiline, and gave her a noble and majestic expression. Indeed, it is said that a nose of such form is an indication of a fine character and strong mind, with courage and enterprise. Being rather plump, the Queen never looked better dressed than in her morning attire. But all the charms that made her one of the most attractive persons of her day soon faded. By the year 1791, the thirty-sixth of her age, the storm of sorrow had fallen on this unfortunate princess; her hair had turned quite grey, and she was much thinner. And this makes me believe in the fidelity of one of the portraits of her, sketched a few days before her death, representing her at thirty-nine in a condition of actual old age and decrepitude. It is true that it was a fearful fall from the loftiest throne in the world to the miserable dungeon where the last three months of her life were passed, and a terrible change from the costly carriages in waiting at Strasbourg to the hideous tumbril that bore her to the scaffold. But she was always the princess. Attired with the crown-diamonds, or wrapped in miserable rags, she was always the daughter of Maria Theresa, and showed suitable courage and energy. At fifteen years of age, the young princess was emancipated from the rule of her stern mother, and plunged into the midst of a dissolute court, where vice reigned openly under the protection of the weak monarch. She knew how to make herself respected then; but she thought she might occasionally break the fetters of etiquette and obtain some innocent amusement. And as malice only needed an excuse to fasten on

her, this was magnified into a crime, and was the origin of all the calumnies that were disseminated about her.

She was always a most tender mother, and always retained the affections of her husband, as an unfaithful wife can never do. The duties of religion always had her full attention, not following them as vigorously as her mother, but taking example by the King, and he was as attentive as possible amid the turmoil of Royalty.

Childless during the earlier part of her union to a spouse who professed to devote his leisure from royal duties to hunting and study, the Queen collected companions of her own, and among them were some young men. Thence arose the shocking stories put down to the credit of that unhappy princess. And yet vice lurks concealed while these visits were quite in public; besides, if the Count de Fersen and MM. de Vaudreuil and de Coigny were admitted to her society, old Besenval was summoned there as well. All these calumnies have come to an end these ten years, for they have lost their purpose. And though by this time all danger that might have arisen from the publication of a criminal intrigue with the Queen has vanished, and all the actors in these fictitious scenes of shame are yet alive, not one of the anecdotes that were propagated at the beginning of the Revolution has been confirmed, and all the dreadful stories are buried in complete silence. I have made inquiries and sought information with zeal and caution, and asked persons attached to the Court and the Queen, and found my

re-  
spect.

Louis XVI. had the affection of a kind husband for his wife, and was tender and caressing. Far from avoiding her, he came to see her as often as his occupations permitted. Besides their meeting at supper, he visited her many times a day. When the Queen was at the Trianon, the King spent part of the day there. Scandal never attributed little quarrels to them, such as few establishments are without. Their mutual attachment was only augmented by several years that elapsed without children, and in course of time a charming family came to draw their bonds of union closer. Can it ever be believed that the Queen, being a mother, would impoverish France, and injure her own son for her brother's advantage, by sending large sums to him, as was reported. Surely maternal affection is a thousand times stronger than any other natural feeling. There is now no need to attempt any justification of this princess, when her misfortunes, her courage, and her death have confirmed the high opinion that the most sensible part of the nation held of her. M. de Besenval's memoirs also would supply a further proof that the crimes were falsely imputed to the Queen, were there any need. This old Swiss lived on terms of great intimacy with her, and wrote his memoirs with all the frankness of his country, fully convinced that his work would never see the light. So he would not have failed to make a report of some of her intrigues, whereas he always displays the highest respect for her; he



always does justice to her merits, her uprightness, and sense. She had, indeed, a good share of the latter, and often gave the King good advice, and he often came to her for it.

The introduction of Franklin's instrument into France was due to the Queen—that known by the name of harmonica or glascorde—in which the notes are produced by the blows of a quantity of little hammers on glasses with more or less water in them; the Queen was a successful player on it as well as on several other instruments.

Marie Antoinette had her special household, her officers, pages, and livery of red and silver; but her escort was of the King's guard. Her rooms were on the first floor of the castle, in the wing looking to the orangery. The entrance was by the top of the marble staircase; and passing through the ante-chambers, the bedroom, and the dressing-room, there was an exit at the bottom of the gallery, by the Saloon of Peace, painted by Lebrun, where the Court met three nights in the week to play at *loto*, or other games, till nine o'clock. There was a little door by the side of the Queen's bed that led to a number of small rooms, very dark and plainly furnished; and by some narrow passages in the entresol, most of which were wadded and had no daylight, was a communication with the King's rooms, and with the marble baths situated at the bottom of the castle court, under the King's State room.

I never saw the Queen dance. Only at the end of a ball, persons who had given up dancing would treat themselves to a *Colonne Anglaise*, and the



Queen joined in; but I have heard it said that she danced very well. I could see for myself that she rode on horseback with much elegance and boldness.

I will not relate the scandalous stories I have heard accredited to the unfortunate princess. Even were they true, I should not be able to ascertain the truth; but I so firmly believe that they are the inventions of infamous spite, that I would not defile my memoirs with them. Not having been a witness of the last two years and a half of her life, I can only repeat the words of many accounts of them, especially one by Montjoie, writer of a *Life of the Queen*, now become very scarce.

But I cannot resist the pleasure of relating an original story. The beauty and attractiveness of the Queen had made a deep impression on the mind of an old member of the Parliament of Bordeaux, whose name was M. de Castelnau. All his good sense could not restrain him from an affection that was the more astonishing as he was no longer young, and he quite lost his head. All his happiness lay in getting sight of the Queen, and he spent his life in the gallery at Versailles, always alone, and reckoning the moments when he might meet her as she passed. He was very regular in attendance at her mass, and no doubt prayer was not his only occupation then; on getting out of the chapel he ran to be in time to see her enter her rooms. If he heard her carriages, he was at the foot of the stairs. He was not to be repulsed by the worst weather, and the sharpest frost could not

repress his desire of gazing on the object of his love. He was melancholy and silent, and would very seldom open out. However, I have conversed with him several times, and if we chanced to speak of the Queen he would make a simple and respectful eulogium on her, and no more. When I went away he was still at Paris, not failing to have taken up his quarters there when the Court left Versailles. I know not what became of him, but several people have told me that he was involved in the massacres of the 10th of August; this seems not unlikely to me, for his passion and his habits must have led him to the Tuileries, and kept him there.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE ROYAL CHILDREN.

I BEHELD all those scions of a noble race, but all have disappeared, even before their spring time. One flower alone escaped the storm, but only to consume her days in sorrow, and pass a wandering and laborious life away from her country and never likely to breathe its healing air. I mean the unfortunate princess who first made Louis XVI. feel the pleasures of paternity.

Madame Royale, Marie Thérèse Charlotte, was born at Versailles on the 19th of December, 1778, after her parents had been married more than eight years. But France longed for a Dauphin, and her prayers were not granted till the 22nd of October, 1781. Afterwards, the Queen had another son on the 27th of March, 1783, and a daughter in the month of July of the following year. I was at Versailles when she was born; at the end of a year she was snatched from her parents, and death saved her from the sorrows that hung over her family. I went to see her lying in state at the Trianon; her eyes were not closed in death, but in the sleep of innocence. She was called Madame Sophie, and

died on the 19th of June, 1787, aged eleven months and ten days.

Madame Lebrun, a celebrated artist of our time, was then engaged in painting the fine picture that was to be seen for a short time in the Hall of Apollo. She had produced, with her surprising power of representing texture, a picture of the Queen in a dress of flame-coloured velvet, having her second son upon her knees, her eldest child leaning on her shoulder, while the Dauphin pointed to his little sister asleep in a cradle. A touching picture, but rendered cold by the magnificence of the dresses. The figure of the youngest princess was effaced on account of her death; and as her eldest brother soon followed her to the tomb, the picture was removed as only recalling painful remembrances, and it has since disappeared like the august personages represented in it.

The Dauphin's growth was difficult; his health delicate, with a tendency to spine complaint, and an extraordinary development of the mind for his age, causing apprehension that he would not be long spared to France. At six years of age he was taken out of the hands of women and entrusted to the care of the Duke d'Harcourt, who was appointed his tutor. This transfer of the royal child from the hands of governesses to those of a tutor was the subject of a ceremony at which the medical faculty gave their assistance. They drew up a formal report of the state of the young prince's health, made a comparison with what it had been at the time of his birth, and concluded from it that the

conditions that had supervened during the interval could in no wise be attributed to any want of care by his first governesses. The Dauphin cried very much at being separated from Madame de Polignac; but was soon consoled by the kindness of M. d'Harcourt and his wife's attention.

I have no notion who led the king to think of selecting M. d'Harcourt to direct the education of the Dauphin. That his family was ancient, that he was kind, polite, and tolerably well informed, was not enough to make him fit to give a good education to a child destined to sit upon the first throne of Europe. M. d'Harcourt was wanting in energy and character; and his connexions and relationship to one of the first families of England, where a branch had taken up their abode in the reign of Philip of Valois, seemed to exclude him from this confidential post. Can anyone not be aware that kings always preserve a feeling of deference for their directors in childhood? and, consequently, if Louis XVII. had come to the crown, and the family of Harcourt during his reign had shared in the secrets of government, would not there have been reason to fear that by their duty to their country being in opposition to their relationship, and a certain inclination ingrained in this family for a rival State, they would have been bad ministers, for they would have been liable to give imprudent advice, if not treacherous.

M. d'Allonville, the first sub-tutor, was brave and loyal, but had not much ability. He was a creature of the house of Harcourt.

M. du Puget, the second sub-tutor, was very learned in natural history and geography; he had travelled in our western colonies, and made intelligent observations. Louis XVI. thought this a great reason for favour, but his notions were considered rather insipid and affected.

The household of the Dauphin was in general badly selected, and Louis XVI., who might have observed in himself the harm of a weak and a bad educator, as he had been obliged to do all the work over again, was not fortunate in the choice of the men to whom he committed the teaching of his son.

At the beginning of 1789 the Dauphin's state of health grew rapidly worse; his neck became bent, and his figure quite distorted. After a long and painful illness, borne with courage and resignation beyond his years, he died at Meudon, whither he had been carried on the 1st of June, 1789.

All who came in contact with him were much grieved at the death of this surprisingly-intelligent child. But Louis XVI. felt his death more acutely than anyone. He was a kind father, and grieved over all his children, and this last blow struck him under circumstances that rendered it peculiarly painful. Care and pain had already fallen on him, and, as is well known, are all the more heavy to a wounded heart.

The Dauphin was borne to Saint Denis without pomp or ceremonial. His parents were not to be laid by him there. Even his own rest was destined to be but very short, for his remains, but little disfigured, were made a toy by the populace, and cast

in a confused heap, with the ashes of a long line of kings who there slept their last sleep, into an enormous pit.

The position of heir to the crown, so little to be desired in those days of sadness, fell to Charles Louis, known by the name of Duke of Normandy, born on the 27th of March, 1785.

This was the unfortunate child, a sufferer under most atrocious persecutions, an object of dread even when confined in the depths of his dungeon, entrusted to the care of an infamous wretch, who in privation and misery contracted the infirmities of age which brought him to the grave. Persons have tried to make his early death the result of a crime, and have supposed that his days were cut short by poison. But, by this time, it has been pretty well ascertained that there was no need to have recourse to such a mode of action. The physician Jeanroy, a man of integrity and grave manners, was called in to examine the body of the interesting sufferer; he was quite determined to speak the whole truth and to encounter any danger. He found organic conditions serious enough to be the cause of death, without the aid of criminal appliances. But there was no reason at all to seek for proofs of a direct attempt upon his life. Surely his death was the consequence of painful privation, complete neglect, and unworthy treatment he had been made to undergo, with easily anticipated result. That was really a course of poison, more horrible and protracted than the effect of a dose of laudanum. But the saddest thing for France is that the whole body of members



of the Convention are responsible for the infamy of this long actual martyrdom, for the death of the Dauphin followed that of Robespierre at an interval of more than a year.

All this was done, though it seemed as if the child's sweetness and amiability must have disarmed his executioners. All who came near him must be glad to recall the openness of his face, the beauty of his complexion and long fair hair, and especially his graceful attention, when at Paris, in watching the movements of his parents, that he might give a smile or gracious salutation, according to degree, to any persons held by the Royal Family to be its most faithful servants in those unhappy days.

Madame Royale had the dignified carriage and haughty gesture of her mother, though very small for her age. This Austrian haughtiness had shown itself so great in her from early childhood, that it had appeared necessary to find a remedy and discover some means of correction. One method considered most likely for the attainment of this object was to give her a little companion of the same age, and of lowly birth, who should take turns with the princess in receiving polite attentions and respect. And it is a proof of the kindness of heart of Madame that, far from entertaining any antipathy for the girl, she always preserved a deep attachment for her.

What force and energy of character must not this unhappy princess have acquired in the school of adversity! What courage she must have had to be the survivor of a whole murdered family, to spend



so many days abandoned and alone, so many nights in disquiet and alarm! Happily she found in Madame Elizabeth good example for the confirmation of her piety and wise advice, that aided her to bear evil with resignation.

As any details that have to do with this young princess, the only scion of Royalty that was spared by the storm of Revolution, have power to touch any tender French heart, I think I ought to relate here some anecdotes of her detention in the Temple that are perfectly true and but little known. Madame de Chantereine, who was placed about her on the cessation of persecution, communicated them to some persons; as well as a daily narrative written by Madame Royale herself on her captivity, having received a copy of it from the princess only under a promise not to allow its reproduction in print or in writing.

Madame de Nismes, who showed me the various letters in which these things are related, received them from her mother, Madame de la Ramière, a friend of Madame de Chantereine, who was kind enough to give certified copies under her own hand.

But out of respect for the promise she had given to Madame, she could not extend the favour to the precious manuscript in which the princess, in noble and touching language, detailed the miseries of her family in the Temple. These notes had been written for Madame de Tourzel. Before their deliverance from prison, Madame de Chantereine had begged Madame to leave her a copy, and she wrote out the

whole with her own hand. It is only about fifty pages, but nothing can possibly be more affecting to read. Many of the matters mentioned are the same as those related by Cléry, and show the accuracy of his account. Madame displays her conviction in it that the death of the Dauphin was not, as was then supposed, the result of a crime, but the natural consequence of the privations and ill-treatment experienced by the unfortunate and interesting child.

The documents that I here insert are five in number. The first is a portion of a letter that Madame de la Ramière intended for her cousin, Madame de Verneuil, in which she enclosed a copy of the letters of Madame, and added some facts obtained from Madame de Chantereine. Madame de Verneuil never received this letter, and a portion of it only was found among the papers of Madame de la Ramière.

The second is a letter from Madame to the Duchess of Orleans. The third is also a letter from her to M. Benezech, Minister of State for Home Affairs. Surprise will be felt at the dignity pervading these two letters, as well as emotion at the feelings running through the fourth, which was addressed to Madame de Chantereine, from Huninguen. The fifth and last is a little diary of the journey from Paris to Huninguen.

*Letter of Madame de la Ramière to Madame de Verneuil.*

I send you a copy of these letters, and cannot read them myself without great emotion. My tears

have often wetted the paper as I wrote them out. S—— has just looked over them, and was so much moved that he could hardly breathe, and stopped short. Ah, how you would weep if you were to read the two pages of the memoir that relate the separation of Madame from Madame Elizabeth, and give the portrait of that angelic woman ! You are the only person that shall have these letters. I request you will not allow copies to be made, and will not read them except to your own family circle, or a very small number of intimate friends. It is the wish of her who allows me to send them to you ; and I know that Madame desires that none of her writings may be published. Her humility and self-abnegation make her resist the prayers of her faithful servants when they beg of her to write down everything about herself, and to relate the history of the latter years of her captivity and excessive loneliness ; in short, to describe the feelings, thoughts, and occupations that took up her time. But her answer was that there could be no possible interest in what related to her personally. Ah, how wrong she was ! Nothing is so interesting as the perusal of her Memoirs. Any persons who have souls will comprehend what an interest is conferred on this narrative by the hand that wrote it.

The letter to the Duchess of Orleans is most admirably delicate, natural, noble, and simple. Every respect is paid to form in it. I am equally fond of the next ; what judgment and tenderness in this recurrence to the services of Madame de Mackau, the mother of Madame de Soucy, whom the princess

had reasons to dislike; and in this selection of Gomin, who had taken care of the Dauphin for the last three months of his life. What sense of gratitude to the other guardian in the reasons that she gives for her preference of Gomin! What she says for M. Hue goes through the heart! She is so careful to give the address, that it is evident she will have no excuses. This letter seems to me full of dignity and perfect kindness.

There is no need to speak of the other letters, they do it for themselves; but I want to say a word to you about Madame de Chantereine, and how she came to be placed at the Temple.

That lady was of the family of Saint Hilaire, of Poitou, one of whom gave the capital answer to his son at the time of the death of M. de Turenne. Her father was one of the younger of a large family, went to India, and married there, making a fortune in business. His ships were taken at sea by M. de Suffren, to be of use in his famous expedition; the cargo perished, and the value of it was placed by M. de Suffren to the account of the Government debt. That was done in accordance with right. But the enthusiasm excited at Versailles by M. de Suffren subsided into indifference, and then coldness and alienation. The debts incurred by the Admiral for the State were never discharged. M. de Saint Hilaire and his partners petitioned for them in vain; they were put aside, and only obtained some slight indemnity. Lastly came the Revolution to crown their misfortunes. M. de Saint Hilaire retired into the country with his son and three daughters.

After some time and various adventures, the second of these young ladies became the wife of M. de Chantereine, an old man of no birth, but a very good sort of person, whose connexions at Paris placed him in a position to be of use to his father-in-law, especially when seconded by a wife of ability.

A short time after their marriage, one of his relations, who was attached to the police service, proposed to his new cousin to have her name placed among the list of ladies to be presented to the Government for admission to the Temple. At first she was full of doubts and fears, but these soon gave way to most vivid interest, and she accepted a place that they easily obtained for her.

It was on the . . . . that she entered the tower. She was presented to Madame by the commissaries. But her voice and breath were quite taken away by the number of stairs she had mounted, and the sight of the young and august victim. Madame pressed her to take a seat on her sofa; it was placed in the very deep embrasure of the window of the room, the same as her mother had occupied. Most part of the day she spent at the bottom of this embrasure at work. Her whole attire was a very scanty and short grey dress, a lawn handkerchief on her head, another round her neck; her back hair was plaited and hung down behind; on each side it was combed out and flowed on her shoulders. Her hands were red, and appearance melancholy and neglected. She desired the commissaries not to come till eight o'clock to conduct Madame de Chantereine to her rooms; it was then six.

As soon as they were alone, Madame asked what had become of her mother, her aunt, and her brother; she was completely ignorant of their fate. Madame de Chantereine said that not having been long at Paris she could not inform her; but she thought they were in Germany. Madame asked if she could go out occasionally; Madame de Chantereine replied that they would allow her to see her family at the gate, but that she was only to go out once in a decade. Madame begged her most anxiously to get all the information she could on a matter that touched her so nearly. But she spoke so confusedly that it was difficult to understand what she said. It took the princess more than a month's reading aloud, with careful study of pronunciation, to make herself understood, so much had she lost the power of expression.

She always rose before Madame de Chantereine. Her bed was made, and room swept and put in order before eight o'clock in the morning. At last they prevailed on her to allow herself to be waited on. She refused, saying that she did not like to lose a habit she might again find necessary, but yielded at last.

Madame de Chantereine every day had a great deal of trouble to find a means of concealing the truth from this unhappy princess. At last she determined to inform her of her parents' fate. She clearly perceived that the first person who should speak openly to her on such a tender matter, and mingle her tears with all those that the information would cause to be shed, would infallibly



gain a position in her heart. Besides, Madame was going to receive visits from Madame de Tourzel, her governess, and Madame de Mackau, her under-governess, and they might chill against her the heart of the young lady for whom her attachment daily increased. Accordingly she took advantage of the first opportunity that occurred. When one morning, as usual, Madame put questions to her about the fate of her family, she told her as tenderly as possible that she must not cherish any hope of seeing them again. Madame let herself fall into her seat, and cried piteously, "What, and my aunt too!" These words were followed by an appalling silence, and then by a deluge of tears. Poor Madame de Chantereine was miserable, and sobbed with her. At last, to turn the course of her ideas ever so little, she represented that the breakfast hour drew near, that her guardians would come and find her in a state for which her companion would be blamed, if she could not restrain herself enough to wipe away her tears. This excellent . . . .

The remainder of this letter has not been found.

*Letter of Marie Thérèse Charlotte, daughter of Louis XVI. to the Duchess of Orleans before her departure.*

December 18, 1795.

Madame.—Previous to my departure from France, I am desirous not to fail in giving a token of the esteem and friendship that I entertain for the only

relation that heaven has left to me in this land. I was desirous of taking you with me, but have been informed that you have no intention of quitting our unfortunate country. I beg of you to believe that I have often thought of you, and that, notwithstanding what has happened, your character was so well known to me that I have never thought otherwise than kindly of you.

Adieu, Madame, I am going; may I see you again some day, and above all, may you be happy! I have always prayed to heaven for your happiness.

Your affectionate cousin,

MARIE THERESA CHARLOTTE.

Certified Copy of the original draught.

*The Same to the Minister of Home Affairs, Benezech.*

Sir.—After due consideration, I desire that Madame de Sérent should go with me. I do justice to the merits of Madame de Soucy and her attachment to myself; but in my actual position, alone, absolutely ignorant of the manners of the world, I have need of some one that can advise me, and I consider that Madame de Sérent is the most capable person, in respect of her age. I have often been able to see her, and have observed that she possesses all the qualities I desire. If you can only give me one lady, I make an absolute request that it may be Madame de Sérent; if you give me two, I also beg for Madame de Soucy, to show my gratitude for the care that her mother bestowed on me for fourteen years.

I strongly recommend M. Hue to you. He is



the last of my father's servants who remained with him in prison. My father himself, just before his death, recommended him to me. I owe this sacred debt to his memory. He lives in the Ile Saint Louis, Quai d'Anjou, where he will certainly be found.

If you choose one of my guardians to be of my suite, I request that it may be M. Gomin. It is a very long time that he has been at the Temple. He is the first person who mitigated my captivity. As he is stationary at the Temple I have more knowledge of him than of his colleague. I hope, Sir, that you will comply with my requests.

*The Same to Madame Chantereine during the journey.*

My dear little Rennette.—I am always deeply in love with you, and I am beginning my letter to you at the top of the page, though you told me not, that I may have room to tell you more. My journey has been fairly fortunate, but slow from the ruined condition of the roads, which are all full of holes, and the want of horses at the posts, so ill are they attended. I was recognised the first day at Provins. My Rennette, how grieved and how pleased I was at it! You cannot imagine how they ran to look at me. Some called me their good lady, others their good princess. Some cried with joy, and I longed to do the same; my poor heart was much agitated, and yearned still more over my country, always so dear to it. What a change from Paris to the country!

There were no more assignats to be seen after

Charenton. There were loud murmurs against the government. And regrets for the old masters—even for unhappy me. Every one was grieved at my going. I am known everywhere, notwithstanding all the care of my companions. Everywhere I feel my grief increase at leaving my unhappy countrymen, while they put up thousands of prayers to heaven for my happiness. Oh! my dear Rennette, if you knew how much I feel! What a pity that such a change did not take place sooner! I should not have had to see all my family, and so many millions of innocent people, perish. But away with a subject that grieves me so much.

My travelling companions are very good people. M. Méchain is a very good man, but timid; he is afraid of the émigrés coming to carry me off, or of the terrorists killing me; there are very few of that sort of people, but he fears on account of his responsibility. He wants to be master a little, but I set that to rights. At the inns he sometimes called me his daughter, or even Sophie, but I never called him anything but Sir; and he must have seen that I was displeased. But he might have spared his pains, as in all the inns they called me Madame, or my Princess. As for Madame de Soucy, she has not pleased me much more than usual; she has not a bit more sense, and seems jealous of these gentlemen. She often quarrels with us on no sort of occasion; and yet she loves her mother very much, and told me that she had not come away without her approbation. I do not like her; she

wearies me; she is a great friend of M. Benezech, but I hope that she will not accompany me to Vienna.

I have just been informed that my household is entirely made up, and waits at Bâle to accompany me to Vienna. Only think, my dear Rennette, Madame de Soucy has brought her son and her maid with her, and I have been refused a maid to wait upon me. I have tried to unravel the intrigue that prevented your coming with me. I fancy the quarter it comes from is M. de Mackau, who has a good deal to do with those people, and has put in his sister. On another side, I have been told that the Emperor required that none of the persons who had been at the Temple should come with me, and that no distinction had been made between you and the others. My Rennette, I am much grieved at it, for I love you much, and have need to give my confidence, and pour out my heart on the bosom of one whom I love, and that is not the person who goes with me, for I do not know her enough to tell her all my feelings. There is no one but you, my dear Rennette, to whom I can open out. I am very unhappy; there was only one person I wanted to have, and I have not got her. Pray earnestly to God for me; I am in a very awkward and embarrassing position. A report is spread that I am to be married in a week, and by all means to my lover;\* but that will not be, at least not for a long time. To-day I shall see the French ambassador at Bâle,† and to-morrow I set out for Bâle.

\* The Archduke Charles.

† M. Barthélemy afterwards of the Directory and transported.

Adieu! my dear little Rennette, I long for you very much, and often think of you. I pressed M. Benezech and M. Méchain very much to set you at liberty, and I hope it is done, and that you are restored to your family, and it is some consolation to me. I have written very badly, but my pens are very bad, and I am not comfortable. Adieu! my dear good Rennette, I shall remember your German relations.

*The same day, sent with the narrative of her journey.*

My dear Rennette,—I send you this history, as I think you will like it; I write it on purpose for you. It is six o'clock, the second carriage arrived at two. I instantly asked Baron and Meunier for news of you; they told me of your trouble, and I must scold you, my dear Rennette; do not do yourself any harm, do not fall ill, I beg you; they told me they were afraid of it. I beg of you to often see Madame de Mackau, as well as M. Gomin. The poor man served me with especial care; he neither ate nor slept. I recommend him strongly to you, my dear friend; he will give you this letter. I have written publicly by M. Méchain to Madame Mackau and Madame de Tourzel, but preferred to write to you like this, not to weary myself. It is very badly written, but I am at the same table as M. Méchain, and he is writing as well. Madame de Soucy and her son are doing the same. M. Hue and M. Gomin are talking by the stove. That is my position at

this moment. Coco,\* my dear Coco, is asleep at the corner of the stove. Adieu ! my dear Rennette, the dear friend of a poor banished girl. To-day, I have seen M. Bacher, the Secretary of the French Legation at Bâle ; I shall see him again to-morrow ; and in the evening at nightfall, at the time when the gates are shut, I shall start for Bâle, where the exchange will be made at once, and I shall start immediately for Vienna, and perhaps be there when you receive this letter. There is great talk of my being married, they say soon, but I hope not ; altogether I do not know what I am saying. I promise always to think a great deal of you ; I cannot and will not forget you. Take care of poor M. Gomin, as he is suffering from the pain of parting. Meunier and Baron pleased me very much by their way of speaking of you. Adieu ! dear Rennette. Peace, peace is what I desire, for more than one reason. May it come, and may I see you at Rome, and

\* The mention of the little dog—for Coco was a dog—taken by Madame Royale, reminds me how fond all the family were of these creatures. Each princess kept a different kind. Mesdames had beautiful spaniels, little greyhounds were preferred by Madame Elizabeth.

I remember one day walking in the great gallery, waiting for the King's retiring, when he entered by the door at the end with all his family and the whole pack, who were escorting him. All at once, probably frightened at something, all the dogs began to bark, one louder than another, and ran away, passing like ghosts across those great dark rooms, and making them ring with their harsh cries. The princesses shouting, calling them, running everywhere after the dogs, with everybody about, completed a spectacle ridiculous enough in itself, and turned it into a diversion that made these august persons, who were glad of distraction, very merry ; Louis XVI. was the only one of all his family who had no dogs in his rooms.

not at Vienna! Adieu! kind, charming, tender Rennette, my beautiful lady!

*Account of the Journey of Madame from Paris to Huningue, written and sent by herself to Madame de Chantereine.*

As I left the tower I passed the wicket without being heard, and crossed the court with those gentlemen. When we got to the great gate they were afraid to open it, for they heard a noise. At last they did open it, and found M. Benezech and three men devoted to him, who had cleared the street of the passers. I took M. Benezech's arm, and we walked along the street. He told me the part I was to act, to look upon M. Méchain as my father; he magnified the dangers I had to run, but did not frighten me. He told me, too, some things that did not surprise me, for we expected a surprise from his manner. M. Gomin will relate them to you; it is safer than writing. At last we got to the Rue Meslay, and found M. Benezech's carriage there. I got into it with him and M. Gomin. We made some turns in the streets, and at last came out in the Boulevards, opposite the Opera. There we found a postchaise, with M. Méchain and Madame de Soucy. I and M. Gomin got into it, and we left M. Benezech. Our passport was asked for at the gates of Paris. At Charenton, the first stage, the postilions would not receive assignats, and required silver, threatening not to take us unless they had it. M. Méchain gave them silver. The rest of the night passed quietly, the postilions went a very good



pace. Next day, the 19th of December, we stopped at Guignes for breakfast, for half an hour. The same day, at four o'clock, I was recognised at Provins, while the horses were being changed, by an officer of dragoons. When we got to Nogent-sur-Seine, the dragoon proclaimed who I was. The mistress of the inn where we had stopped for refreshments recognised me, and behaved very respectfully. The yard and street were full of people desirous of seeing me, and quite friendly. We returned to the carriage, and the people heaped blessings on me, and wished me all happiness. We went from there to sleep at Gray. There the mistress of the house told us that the courier of the Venetian ambassador, M. Carletti,\* had told her I was going to pass with two carriages. We went to bed at midnight, and started again at six in the morning, on the 20th of December. On our road we were stopped at Troyes by the want of horses, as M. Carletti had taken them all. But we got some at last. We went very slowly that day, only making ten leagues, thanks to Signor Carletti. At last, in the evening, at Vandœuvre, M. Méchain determined to pass M. Carletti. He showed the Government order that authorised us, in preference to any other persons, to take horses. M. Carletti made a great disturbance, but we overcame him at last. We went on at eleven o'clock at night, and M. Carletti at one in the morning. The wretch! Our courier, whom I like very much, cannot abide

\* The princess is mistaken, he was envoy of the Grand-Duke of Tuscany.

him, and never calls him anything but the cloth-merchant, for his carriage was full of it. The courier's name is Charot. He has taken great pains over our journey, and to make the postilions go quickly. He is really a man. Next day we got out to breakfast at Chaumont, where I was publicly recognised by the town, and everybody crowded to look at me. M Méchain called the municipal authorities, and showed them his passport for his wife and daughter; they did not believe him. I got into the carriage again, and, during this short march at a foot's pace, I received thousands of blessings that touched me very much, and that came from the depths of the heart. That night we spent at Fay-Billot, for want of horses, as often happened to us. Next day was spent in quiet. We only made a journey of twelve leagues, and so passed the night at Vesoul; and the next day we found the road so frightfully bad that no notion can be formed of it, with enormous holes that we only cleared by the skill of our postilions. At last, having encountered thousands of difficulties, leaving Paris at midnight, on the 18th of December, we reached Huninguen on the 24th of December, at six in the evening, after spending six days on the road.

Though a courtier's well-considered letter is very cold after these models of ingenuous grace and feeling, I thought it right not to omit to transcribe in this place a letter of the Abbé de Tressan, about the arrival of Madame at Mittau, and her meeting with the remainder of her family.



*Letter from the Abbé de Tressan.*

Sir,—I came here some days ago with Lord Folkestone, and though we have very little time to finish our journey, we could not withstand the wish to be witnesses of the arrival of Madame Thérèse of France; the King kindly allowed us to stay over the day of her espousals with the Duke d'Angoulême. It would be impossible to describe all the feelings that moved us; but as any particulars connected with that angel of consolation excite the religious, honourable, and tender feelings of all noble souls, we will recall our remembrances and thoughts, so that you may put them into some order. My lord and I beg of you to quote anything from this letter that you may think capable of inspiring the sentiments that we feel.

You will remember the heaven-sent circumstance that came to assuage the tears shed over the sorrows of France and of his own family by the heir of Saint Louis, Louis XII., and Henry IV. What calm overspread his brow when he learnt that Madame was on her way to Vienna! His heart was not so constrained in its grief when he knew that she was in that asylum; and as he delighted to repeat, assisted by a faithful friend who would not forgive me for naming him, he called up all his care and pains to act in obedience to the desire of Providence in confiding to him the charge of watching over the fate of the august and unhappy daughter of Louis XVI.

Accordingly the King did not remain a moment in uncertainty upon the choice of the spouse he

desired to see accepted by Madame. His fatherly and French heart could never bear the notion of seeing her parted from France by a foreign alliance, although it might seem to be very necessary to give him a support, and to save her from the destitution that is still to be feared. After being assured of the approbation of Madame, the King turned all his attention to gain her good-will, to unite herself to the sorrows and hopes that were the lot of the heir to his name. The King's prayers have been heard, Madame is in his arms, and thence claims her right to the love of the French ; thence she forms ardent desires for their happiness ; for the only trace left of her long and terrible misfortunes is an excessive need to see happy people.

As soon as the King had removed all obstacles, he informed the Queen of the intended union of his adopted children, and requested her assistance in making them happier. The Queen hastened to the spot, and has been at Mittau ever since the fourth of this month. She can see satisfaction at her presence in all faces, and the prayers that she may hear formed for her happiness show her what love and devotion the French around her have for their mistress. The day after the Queen's arrival, the King went in his carriage to meet Madame. She had not been enfeebled by her long and laborious journey, and only suffered from the delay that still intervened before she could meet the King. As soon as the carriages came pretty near each other, Madame commanded a halt. She hastily got out ; they wanted to try to support her ; but, slipping away

with marvellous dexterity, she ran through the clouds of dust to the King, who ran to meet her with arms outstretched to press her to his heart. All the King could do did not prevent her casting herself at his feet; he stooped hurriedly to raise her, and she was heard to say, "At last I see you again; I am happy, here is your child, watch over me, and be my father." Oh, Frenchmen, why were you not there to weep for your King? You must have felt that one who could shed such tears could not be the enemy of any person; you must have felt that nothing could add to the happiness of his mind but your regrets, your repentance, and your love. The King, without offering a word, pressed Madame to his breast, and presented the Duke d'Angoulême to her. The young prince, under reverential restraint, could say nothing, but his tears fell upon his cousin's hand while he pressed it to his lips.

They returned to the carriages, and Madame was soon at her journey's end. As soon as the King saw his servants flying to meet him he cried out, radiant with happiness, "Here she is," and at once led her to the Queen. That instant the castle rang with joyful shouts; they rushed about, there was entire freedom of entrance, no distinction; it seemed there was nothing there but a shrine for the junction of all hearts. Anxious looks were fixed on the Queen's rooms. Madame first paid her homage to Her Majesty, and then was brought by the King to show herself to us, while our eyes were too full of tears to be able to distinguish her features.

Looking at the crowds around, the King's first

proceeding was to lead Madame to meet the inspired man who said to Louis XVI., "Son of Saint Louis, ascend to heaven." He presented Madame to him before anyone else. Tears were flowing from all eyes, in complete silence. Having performed this pious duty, there was something else to be done. The King led Madame into the midst of his guards. "Here," said he, "are the faithful guards of those whom we lament; their age, their wounds, and tears tell you all I would say." Then he turned to us and said, "At last she has come, we will not be separated from her any more; now we are not strangers to happiness." Do not expect me, Sir, to relate to you all our vows, thoughts, and questions; you must fill up the omissions of our confused sentiments. Madame retired to her rooms to perform a pleasant and needful duty, by expressing her deep gratitude to His Majesty the Emperor of Russia. As soon as she entered into his empire she received the most noble proofs of his anxious interest; and in her heart Madame had felt all her debt of obligation to this august and generous sovereign, gifted by Heaven with the power and will to aid unfortunate sovereigns.

When she had accomplished this duty, Madame asked for the Abbé Edgeworth, and her tears flowed in torrents as soon as she was alone with this last comforter of Louis XVI.; her heart beat so violently that she was ready to faint. M. Edgeworth was frightened, and wished to summon assistance. Madame said to him, "Pray let me weep before you; I am comforted by these tears and

your presence." There were then no witnesses but Heaven and him whom she regarded as mediator. And yet, not one complaint flowed from her heart. M. Edgeworth saw nothing but tears; I have heard this from his own self. He has allowed me to mention it on his authority; he feels that all personal modesty ought to give way to the need of making known this pure and heavenly mind.

The royal family dined in private; and about five o'clock we had the honour of being presented to Madame. It was only then that we could observe the general appearance of her countenance. It seems as if Heaven had desired to unite a holy character that makes her dearer to us, and more venerable to the French, to freshness, grace, and beauty. In her countenance may be seen a likeness to Louis XVI., to Marie Antoinette, and to Madame Elizabeth. The likeness to these noble persons is so strong that we felt we must be reminded to pray to them. This remembrance and the presence of Madame seemed to unite heaven and earth; and doubtless every time that she chooses to speak in their name, her sweet and noble mind will constrain all feelings to follow its example.

Frenchmen, here is one whom you can make still more happy by resuming your ancient faith and love for your kings. Here she is demanding to enter among you, to join with the King, her uncle, in perfect accord, as executrix of the will of Louis XVI., for forgiveness of injuries. With her heart full of tender and religious feelings, she comes to love you, and to console you for your lengthened

sorrows. She comes in the garb of her innocence and youth, of her sorrows, and her likeness to her family. She comes circled with a tribute of prayer that all honest, loyal, tender, and faithful souls on the earth believe to be her due; she comes, like the angel of peace, to disarm vengeance and cause the furies of war to cease. May your hearts recall her, and then you will see your harbours opened and your commerce renewed; no more will your children be torn from your arms to be led to death; you will recover happiness, rest, and the esteem of the world.

But, Sir, I see that I am encroaching upon your share; so I conclude, feeling very sure that you will be grateful to me for my endeavour to make you a partaker in my joy.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

THE ABBÉ DE TRESSAN.

With this I conclude my Recollections of Madame. I also read an account of her marriage some time ago. I think it was communicated to me by the Duchess de Laval, who had received it from her uncle, Cardinal de Montmorency, Grand Almoner, who was summoned to Mittau for the ceremony. But I kept no copy, as I had not formed the idea of writing these Memoirs.

## CHAPTER IV.

## MONSIEUR.

“A Prince whose place chanced to be next to the first throne in the world, without conferring on him any of the qualities that command respect, and gain the attachment of nations. There is no one but thinks that in the most happy times he must have let the reins of empire slip through his hands. His reign would have been that of favourites, and France would have had to bear all the pettiness of the reign of James II., and the profusion of that of Henry III.”  
—MEMOIRS OF MONTGALLIARD.

IT may be said that the mind of this prince was not at all more calculated for the part he was compelled to play, through our misfortunes, than was his birth apparently likely to call him to it. The policy of courts seemed for centuries to have adopted the mission of stifling all the germs of active virtues, that the younger brothers of kings might have possessed. The brother of Louis XIV., with every capability for becoming a great man, was brought up like a princess. His love of glory was not sufficiently active to make him surmount his idleness; and when with the army he did not fear a battery so much as a heavy rain or a bivouac.



Marie de' Medici brought up her son, Gaston, in the greatest pusillanimity. Uncertain, weak, ruled by the first favourite of more energetic character, whom he would abandon at the first indication of danger, he was nothing but a partisan put in motion by hidden springs.

The points of resemblance between the brothers of Louis XIII. and of Louis XVI., would strike any observer. Monsieur had a very cultivated mind; he was a good historian, had a perfect acquaintance with the poetry of various nations, and his conversation was instructive and agreeable. But though this well-educated mind and scientific knowledge might have been enough for a private individual, it certainly was not sufficient for a prince destined to so high a fate, and living in such difficult times.

The line describing the gallant and timid Henry III., "Who shines in second rank is lost in first," might be perfectly applied to Monsieur. A negative but amiable sort of prince at the court of Louis XVI., he became a timid unenergetic king, taking the most minute details of etiquette for grandeur during his time of trouble. Always attempting to model himself on Henry IV., no prince was ever less fitted to resemble him or recover his kingdom by force. Far from having the courage of the model that the princes of the house of Bourbon selected when it was too late, Monsieur was afraid of pain and fatigue. Having no decided character, he let himself be governed by all about him, without vigour to keep order among candidates for

his confidence, he made his court, in vulgar but truthful words, the court of King Petaud.

I will not pursue this prince in his misfortunes, as they are foreign to my subject; besides, his troubles might make me forget the harsh truths that are a necessity of impartial history. I only relate his life at Versailles, where at first he passed his time in obscurity. Abstaining from business, entirely under the sway of Madame de Balbi, he spent his life in a charming house and beautiful garden he possessed, near the Swiss lake, at the entrance of the wood of Satory. He seldom went hunting with the King; but was very attentive to the grand ceremonies.

Madame de Balbi ruled more over his mind than his senses. She was not pretty enough to captivate him by anything but by making use of the ascendancy of a managing woman over a weak man. Nothing less than evidence of the misconduct of Madame de Balbi in Germany and London, could have opened the eyes of Monsieur.

This prince's weakness was brought into a stronger light by the revolution. He became suspected by all parties from his feebleness and want of courage. The Republicans and Anarchists had no confidence in him. The Royalists never forgave his having himself voted at the second assembly of Notables, and made his followers vote for the double representation of the Third Estate. They united with the moderate party in blaming his conduct towards M. de Favras.

So few partisans had this prince in his hopes to

re-ascend the throne of France, that he lightly allowed hundreds of conspiracies to be hatched, all without means, conducted by fools or rogues, that sunk a thousand families into mourning and terror. But the favourites were not exposed; the prince in his weakness gave in to everything; the smallest projector was welcomed at Blankenburg or Mittau, and listened to with cordiality.

I will give some particulars of the unhappy fate of M. de Favras, and the behaviour of Monsieur in the matter; I was a witness of it.

M. de Favras was a man of good birth and cultivated mind, but with an ardent brain that conceived a thousand projects without settling on any, and lost by inconsistency the fortune that his talents might have gained; he was arrested on Christmas Eve, 1789. M. Jauge, the banker, commander of a battalion of the National Guard, brought us the news at midnight mass. M. de Favras was accused of conspiring against the nation, and especially of a desire to promote the King's escape on the 5th of October. It may be that the active mind of M. de Favras, and his excitable nature, overwrought by events, may have been led to the conception of some plans: but they would not have been magnified into such high crimes without other reasons. M. de Lafayette wished to give the people the sight of the condemnation of a noble. M. de Besenval was in his hands; but the old Swiss had been a friend of the Duke of Orleans, and the Committee of Inquiry was filled by his partisans. The conviction of M. de Favras inculpated Monsieur, who had been

in communication with him, and had formerly got him a place among the Swiss Guards. Monsieur could justify himself by a bit of meanness, or might allow the suspicion to float over his head, but either course was degrading. The latter made him suspected by the people; the former made him vile in the eyes of all France. The Prince was weak enough to prefer security to public esteem; he forsook M. de Favras, as Gaston forsook the Duke de Montmorency. Not one of his favourites used his influence to prevent his forgetting his position and going to the Hôtel de Ville to disgrace the name of Bourbon by pronouncing the most abject apology for his deeds and actions, declaring himself a citizen of Paris, reminding all of his meanness at the Assembly of Notables, "where he had always believed that the time of Revolution had come, . . . that royal authority ought to be the bulwark of national liberty, and national liberty the base of Royal authority." M. Bailly, President of the Commune, who would not miss the chance of degrading the majesty of the throne, answered him, "That it was remembered that Monsieur had shown that he was the first citizen of the kingdom when he voted for the Third Estate; that he was the founder of equality; and that he gave the first example of it." It was on the evening of the 26th of December that Louis XVIII. accomplished this humiliating performance; on that day he broke the last steps of the ladder that might have raised him to the throne of Henry IV.; he alienated France, and deposed himself.

I will not pursue the frightful and iniquitous trial of the unhappy Favras; it is in the domain of history. In his ignominious execution, he set to all the future victims an example of piety, resignation, and courage only inspired by innocence and religion.

In 1800, I often saw one of his sisters at Paris, soliciting the removal of her name from the list of émigrés, and, as time makes changes, the name of Favras was one reason that she advanced for obtaining justice from the Consular government.

Monsieur was very fat, but without the stoutness that is characteristic of power and vigour, like that of Louis XVI. He had an unhealthy constitution, and so was obliged even in youth to have recourse to medicinal potions to restore the circulation of the blood, and procure the dissipation of humours. And this unhealthy condition was increased by want of exercise. His bad figure rendered him unfit for riding on horseback, and he was very awkward at it. No prince ever had such a disagreeable carriage; for he had the general waddle of the Bourbons in its most excessive form, and there was no getting used to his bad shape for all his pains and the elegance of his dress.

He was, too, very curious in horses, and his equipage was handsomer than those of other members of the royal family. I may here remark that Monsieur did not possess the cross of Saint Louis. The King and the heir to the throne were the only persons who could wear it without having made a campaign; and the journeys of Monsieur to the

South and to Luneville to his regiment of Carabineers could not serve as such. Accordingly, on the feast day of Saint Louis, after attending the King's rising, he used to retire to avoid being a witness of the procession of knights.

In 1786, he brought his fine regiment of Carabineers to be reviewed by the King at his beautiful estate of Grosbois, which subsequently fell into the hands of the director Barras, then of General Moreau, and seemed an ominous possession to all its owners. The cavalier who took General Ligonier prisoner at the battle of Lawfeld, in 1747, and refused his money, was presented to him. All the Court was magnificently entertained at Grosbois.

Monsieur had no children by his marriage with Marie Joséphine Louise of Savoy, daughter of the King of Sardinia. Her want of offspring did not make him fonder of Madame, who had a poor appearance, and was bad-tempered as well. Unfriendly with the Queen, and even with her sister, the Countess of Artois, whose affection was concentrated on her children, Madame led a solitary life, spending nearly all her time in her charming garden at Montreuil, where beauties of wood and water were found together, and elegant houses and furniture combined to make a delightful habitation. Madame passed her time in the occupations of country life, in oblivion of the wearisome etiquette of the Court. She would come back to Versailles from visiting her little farm, her animals, and garden, with enormous nosegays of flowers, and a quantity of little birds she had taken in nets. They were meant to



be used for a soup that was made, not in her kitchen, but in her own rooms, and was the whole work of one of her maids. Madame would, as a favour, offer some of this famous soup, seasoned more by fancy than actual ingredients, to the members of the royal family, who came every evening at nine o'clock exactly to sup with her. Each had his or her own dishes brought, and the last touch was put to them in the little kitchens close by Madame's rooms, which were at the end of the left wing of the castle, on the side of the Orangery, above the Rue de la Surintendance. Monsieur occupied the floor above.

He was born on the 17th of November, 1755, so that it was in his fortieth year that fate called him to a throne which he seemed destined never to occupy.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE COUNT D'ARTOIS.

MEN are often unjust to one another, and still more so towards those who are destined to be their rulers. These cannot be forgiven for faults tolerated every day in society; they must not appear anything but perfect. I am far from approving the transgressions of the Count d'Artois and his numerous infidelities to his gentle and highly-respected companion; I only say that, if he had not been born a prince, and had been lost among the crowd, they would hardly have been noticed.

Towards the end of his stay in France, the persons who were working in secret for a revolution and change of dynasty, tried to render his faults the more conspicuous because, having children, the fact of his presence was more inconvenient. They wished to drive him away or to destroy him, and Mirabeau one day, in answer to a person who was wondering at the general animosity against the Count d'Artois, even said, "The plethoric condition of the King and of Monsieur may end their days, and that reduces the question to the Dauphin, who is only an infant."

Previously, the Count d'Artois had been adored by the people, since he was affable to all, and was of the national joyous temperament. The habit of driving about in Paris, and even his profuse expenditure, contributed to this popularity. It was only the religious moralists who blamed him for his transgressions and prodigalities, laying them to the score of his youth. I know that the prince had not received an education to fit him for living in difficult times; and all the faults that can be cast up against him after his departure from France arose from a quality innate in all the Bourbons, excessive good-nature and its concomitant extreme facility to be led, and a want of proper discretion in the choice of counsellors. The conduct of the Count d'Artois in England and in Germany is a proof of it; but he could not have a will when he was the unfortunate toy of European powers.

The Count d'Artois always kept his mouth open, and this gave him a far from intelligent expression; apart from this blemish his figure was light and graceful, and his countenance open and pleasant; his whole appearance, indeed, was a contrast to the King's somewhat heavy gait, and the unfortunate peculiarities of Monsieur.

He was much fonder of pleasure than of study, and by general report, had that fashionable ease and light amiability that pleases women. So credit must be given to the reports that not many beauties were cruel to him.

Besides Madame de Polastron, who was for several years his avowed mistress, and followed

him in misfortune till parted by death, the Duchess of Guiche was one of those whom the public long looked upon as his easiest conquest; but as in this kind of controversy little trust can be placed in gossip, it is always rash to venture assertions about such uncertain matters. The passion of Madame de Polastron for the Count d'Artois was as open as it was real, for heart-felt affection was their only bond of union, and she never was intriguing or avaricious.

The Countess d'Artois was a princess of gentle and quiet disposition, and being likewise rather plain, not formed to recall her volatile spouse. She was often unwell, and would retire to a little house at Saint Cloud while the Count d'Artois hastened to the Bois de Boulogne, to his little Castle of Bagatelle, or to Paris, to desert even the Court beauties, and find greater liberty in a less exalted rank. However, the prince was as reserved as possible in his transgressions; and, if such be any excuse, I may say that he concealed these breaches of morality and morals as much as he could.

The Count d'Artois had four children by his marriage. Two daughters, who might have been a comfort to their mother, died in tender years; there were only two sons left, the Dukes of Angoulême and Berry. The first, who is now heir to a very remote claim to the throne of France, had been engaged to the daughter of the Duke of Orleans, and broken off; but it was represented to the Queen how much nearer the Duke of Angoulême was brought to the throne by the feeble health of the

King's two sons, and that it might be well for her own daughter, Madame Royale, to contract this alliance, as we have seen effected under less fortunate auspices. The Queen assented to these observations, and caused the earlier engagement to be broken off. This opposition of Marie Antoinette had a great effect in developing the hatred the Duke of Orleans had sworn to the Royal Family.

The two children of the Count d'Artois were brought up under the care of the Duke de Sérent, in the Castle of Beauregard, which stood in the midst of woods in the direction of Marly, and was the property of the Marquis of Montaigu. These two princes did not evince any great force of character; and their lives have always been obscure ever since the overthrow of the dynasty.

There was little in unison between the character of Madame and her sister, the Countess d'Artois, who, as I have said, lived a very retired life; there was little intimacy between the two princesses. Though I have always used the expression, M. le Comte d'Artois, I should observe that it was proper to say Monsieur, Comte d'Artois; as if the word Monsieur was a designation of the children of France, the issue of the sovereign or his heir apparent in direct line, while the title was M. le Duc de Berry, as he was of the collateral line. With the exception of Monsieur, who was always addressed by this title, the other princes were called Monseigneur and Serene Highness.

The Count and Countess d'Artois, with Madame Elizabeth, occupied at Versailles all the first story

of the right wing of the castle looking over the orangery, in the gallery known by the name of the Princesses'. Though these apartments were very large, there was space for several small rooms that were lighted from the gallery, and were very dark.

When the King went to Paris on June 17, 1789, the Count d'Artois was quite determined to go instead of him, though well aware of the dangers the Orleanist faction were preparing for him. But it is natural to a generous man to encounter danger in order to avert it from the beloved. This was one of the fine points of the prince's life. The King opposed his intention, and during the journey became so convinced of the murderous projects of the factions that he obliged his brother to leave France. A few days afterwards, the prince's morning attendants found he was gone when they came to wait on him. By the assistance of some faithful servants (for treason surrounded this unhappy family), he escaped by a secret door and evaded all observation. Having received the final adieus of his brother, he left his country, and for ever, as it now appears. He retired to Turin, to his father-in-law, and soon sent for his wife and children.

## CHAPTER VI.

MADAME ELIZABETH.

THERE are souls that seem only to appear on this earth to present to men, whether in prosperity or in misery, a perfect model of all virtues; their mission is to show the scope of goodness in the highest rank, and of resignation and courage in pain and suffering.

Madame Elizabeth was undeniably one of those rare persons, only seen at distant intervals during the course of ages. Without forgetting her rank, she gave an example of the most steadfast piety beneath the sumptuous roofs of the palace of our Kings. She lived amid her family, the favourite of all, and the admiration of the world. In prison she was a model of sisterly tenderness, from her courage arising from pious resignation, and it may be said that she presented a great example of constancy in adversity, and in death to the princely victims the number of whom she completed.

When I came to Versailles, Madame Elizabeth was twenty-two years of age. Her fresh complexion, pretty pink colour, and plump figure, must have attracted notice, and even more so than her beauty

did her air of contentment and the reflexion of a calm mind to be seen in her face. Her vigorous constitution made exercise necessary. She was fond of billiards and riding, and in the latter her elegance, and figure, and courage were remarkable. But she never allowed these light amusements, which were requisite for her health, to interfere with her devotion to various religious observances. She prayed in private as well as during the daily worship of the whole royal family together, and observed all the precepts of the church, and frequently received the Sacrament.

When I came, all the talk was of the wish of Madame Elizabeth to enter the cloister, and take the veil at Saint Cyr. The King was too fond of his sister to be able to endure separation, and would not give his consent before her coming of age. It seemed as if a secret voice was revealing to him the help he would receive from her in his misfortunes, and was urging him to preserve her to his family as a consoling angel to help them to bear their trouble, and to teach his daughter piety both by precept and example.

There were also reports of a marriage between Madame Elizabeth and the Emperor Joseph. The Queen was sincerely attached to her brother, and loved Madame Elizabeth most tenderly; she ardently desired this marriage as a means of raising the lady to one of the first thrones in Europe, and possibly of turning the thoughts of the Emperor from his innovations, and bringing him back to principles of a safer nature for social order and the peace of



Kings. This negotiation was soon dropped; it may be because Joseph II. did not care to take a third wife, or perhaps from disinclination on the part of Madame Elizabeth to leave France.

She consoled herself for the repugnance of Louis XVI. to her taking the veil by often going to Saint Cyr, and spending whole days among the pupils and ladies of the community. On other days she indulged her taste for solitude in a pretty house and delightful garden she possessed in the Avenue de Paris, near the hill of Montboron. She threw herself into rural occupations there, and cultivated her natural talents for various branches of study.

But the severe etiquette that clings to the steps of the great in the world forbade her to pass the night in this residence without a guard and a great attendance, so long as she had not reached the age when our laws allow us to dispose of ourselves. But the day she attained her majority (the 3rd of May, 1789) was the beginning of our sorrows. The crowd was drawn to the Avenue de Paris by the neighbourhood of the States-General; it was continually blocked up by groups of the factious. There never was any certainty of a quiet night. So the Princess was obliged to give up a pleasure to which she had so long looked forward, and she never slept in her house.

The habitation is now pulled down; the spot and the remains are still pointed out to the curious by some old servants. But the remembrance will soon be lost like the building, and the generation that saw it raised; there will be nothing left but the im-

perishable memory of her virtues. History will consecrate the woes of the unfortunate owner, and traditions of her benevolence will be preserved from age to age in the surrounding huts.

Madame Elizabeth's attachment to Louis XVI. developed itself with greater energy when the revolution took place. She was determined not only to offer sympathy to her unhappy brother, but even to share his dangers. Mesdames tried in vain to take her with them to Italy; she resisted their entreaties, and gave up a journey that might have seemed a family duty rather than be separated from the King.

The devotion she exhibited on the 21st of June, 1792, will be placed by history among the finest specimens of heroism, when she tried to cause herself to be mistaken for the Queen by the assassins, and after that would not leave her brother as long as the danger lasted; assisting the spectators, who fainted under their feelings of distraction, while the victims were calm and resigned.

The trial of Madame Elizabeth, her answers to the interrogatory, and her last moments were worthy of her courage and virtue. She never forgot her position, and died like a princess. She was guillotined on the 10th of May, 1794, at the age of thirty years and seven days.

The Princess Elizabeth had been very carefully educated by her governess, the Princess de Marsan, and she worked for her own improvement every day. She had talents for music and painting,

spoke Italian, and even a little Latin, and had a thorough knowledge of mathematics. She received lessons from Professor Le Blond, who is known by several able works, and he has often given me confirmation of the accounts of the princess's learning in this science, even in its most difficult and abstruse branches. I have mentioned her taste for painting; the last oil-picture that I saw her paint at Paris was a large canvas representing a landscape and waterfall.

Madame Elizabeth's suite of rooms at Versailles was at the end of the Princes' Gallery, in the left wing of the castle. At Paris her lodging was at the Tuileries, in the Pavilion of Flora, in the rooms afterwards occupied by Pope Pius VII., during his stay in France. And in these rooms a little matter took place that I must not leave out of my notes, for it will serve as another token of the goodness of Madame Elizabeth.

The first lady of the bed-chamber, Madame de Navarre, went with the wife of La Place, the Senator, to receive the Pope's blessing, and was so overcome by her recollections, at the sight of the place where her beloved mistress had dwelt, that she could not control her grief, and burst into tears. She could scarcely inform the worthy Pontiff of the reason of her trouble. Pius VII., who was very reticent, was himself much moved, and only said a few words about the virtues of Madame Elizabeth, while pointing up to heaven, as the place where she is now receiving her recompense. Madame de Navarre hastened to

leave a place that recalled such painful memories.

It seems that after the King's death, some of the commissaries at the Temple were not so savage as the former ones, relaxed their vigilance, and allowed themselves to be humane enough to permit some friends of their noble victims to come into the tower. Indeed several members of the Commune were denounced for permitting this; and I have had the opportunity of seeing a very pretty portrait of Madame Elizabeth, which she found means to send from her place of captivity to Madame de Raigecourt, one of her ladies-in-waiting, then in Germany. She had represented herself in this miniature as wrapping a funeral scarf of crape round an urn engraved with the name of Louis XVI. She seemed to have lost some of her freshness, but it was impossible not to recognise her features. Madame Royale had the opportunity of giving particulars of this captivity in the manuscript that I have mentioned, which will not be lost to history.

## CHAPTER VII.

## MESDAMES THE AUNTS.

AT their father's Court Mesdames enjoyed the consideration that virtue always commands from the most immoral men. Louis XV. throughout his debauchery gave his daughters the respect merited by obedience and filial affection. Indeed they were not entirely strangers to public business; they were often asked their advice, especially about church appointments. But the King's death produced an entire change for them. Family bonds become weaker the further they are stretched, and besides the brilliancy of their virtue was less visible in a court where, notwithstanding scandal, morals were pure, and the chief an example to his subjects. Also the King, as was quite natural, was more ready to consult his wife and his brothers than more distant relations. The change that had taken place in the position of Mesdames' age which almost always occasions a slight deterioration of equability of temper, and again the kind of oblivion in which they were left, all combined to disturb the intimacy that might have subsisted between the aunts and nephews. But if the Queen

and the princesses, her sisters-in-law, were not fond of Mesdames on account of their seeking to assume an unpleasant tone of superiority, Louis XVI. himself showed a marked affection for them, beyond the respect that was their due from him; for the King was so kind that it was impossible he should not love those who had during his infancy supplied to him the place of the authors of his life.

Thus the position of Mesdames at Court being obscure and unsatisfactory, they were seldom seen there. They spent the chief part of the year either at Bellevue, on that splendid height that commands the proud city and the charming country around it, or at the Hermitage, a little garden at the other end of Versailles, by the road leading to Marly.

Madame Adelaide and Madame Victoire were the only survivors of the four daughters of Louis XV. who outlived their father. The third, Madame Sophie, had died two years before; and the other, Madame Louise, had quitted the world in one of those sudden resolutions that can only be inspired by great religious fervour, or by a quick and ardent spirit that will not be satisfied by smaller sacrifices; resolutions that always cause astonishment to men of the world, whatever be their cause.

It was in 1771 that Madame Louise, unmoved by her father's prayers and her sister's tears, tore herself from the pleasures of the Court, to bury herself at thirty-four years of age in a cloister of Carmelites, and to forget the empty grandeurs of earth beneath a hair-cloth garment in one of the most austere religious orders. Scandal made many attempts to



pursue her there, but found no response. And still Madame Louise was blamed by several persons for having retired such a short distance from the Court, for seeing too much company, and still taking an active part in the affairs of the world and the interests of the State, while she practised the humblest labours like the lowest of the nuns. No doubt her self-denial would have seemed more complete at a greater distance from her family, and with vows of more absolute solitude ; but her sacrifice seems large enough as it was ; and, without stopping to consider that perhaps the example of piety given by Madame Louise might have been of more use at Court than hid in a cloister, it must be said with truth that such a resolve must have required a great deal of courage.

Madame Louise died in December, 1787, and made so little sensation that, as I was unwell, I did not hear of it till some time afterwards. And it was no wonder, for the princesses had not been slow to forget her, though they had visited her continually during the life of Louis XV.

I have mentioned above, that they did not receive much more attention at Court, and I fancy their tempers were a little sharpened by this neglect ; so they were very hard to please in waiting upon them. The least unpunctuality received a sharp reproof. If I was not afraid of being thought spiteful, I could give some proofs of my own experience. I will only mention that I was sharply scolded one day by Madame Adélaïde for putting my hands into a muff that she had given me to carry while she went upstairs.



If the pictures of Louis XV. that I have seen are good likenesses, this princess resembled him exactly, and possessed his haughty glance. Madame Victoire was shorter and stouter.

Mesdames the aunts only came to Paris in the winter, as they had been able to stay at Bellevue up to the fifth of October. Seeing that they were of very little use to their nephew, unable to enjoy his confidence, and fearing measures opposed to their religious opinions, they at last decided on going to Rome. Possibly in their solitude, standing in a position whence they could form a better judgment of the course of events, theirs was the surer presentiment of all the trouble that hung over their family; therefore they separated themselves from it for life, but they could not prevail on Madame Elizabeth to leave her brother and accompany them.

All the precautions with which they had fenced themselves, all the passports they had procured, did not prevent their being arrested by a little municipality that, like so many others, thought itself sovereign, and boldly rose above the law. So they stopped at Arnay-le-Duc, in Burgundy, till their equerry, M. de Boishenl, had been sent to Paris and returned with a decree of the National Assembly ordering the liberation of the two princesses, whom some of the factious considered guilty because they were about to take advantage of the freedom granted to every individual by the laws of the nation.

No doubt Mesdames did not find themselves happy at Rome. The news of the fall of the throne of their fathers and the sorrows of their family

came to disturb the peace they might have enjoyed in the Eternal City. They could at least carry their tears and prayers for their guilty country to the foot of the altar, till the day when they were forced to quit the hospitable city that had received them, by conquests that the noble head of the church could neither arrest nor foresee. So they left Rome to retire to Naples; and after several changes of their place of refuge, Madame Adélaïde had the sorrow of seeing her younger sister die at Trieste. Her own mournful existence was shortened by grief, and she soon died herself at Klagenfurth, without having had the pleasure of meeting a single member of her family since leaving France.\*

Mesdames' lodgings at Versailles were on the ground-floor, on the chapel side, under the great apartments, where a collection of natural history is now exhibited.

I have often read letters from Madame Adélaïde to her lady-in-waiting, the Duchess of Montmorency-Laval, who had gone into Germany. She wrote pleasantly, and expressed her thoughts with ease and grace. She was very ill while I was at Court. An operation for fistula was performed at Bellevue, and great suffering endured with much fortitude. I have said the attachment of Louis XVI. to his aunts was not of that intimate kind that exhibits entire confidence, but on this occasion he showed how precious their lives were to him.

\* This must not be taken literally. Besides their niece, Madame Clotilde, married to the Prince of Piedmont, Mesdames found the Count d'Artois in Italy, and he met them at the frontier, and went with them to Bologna.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE PRINCES OF THE BLOOD.

ALL the descendants of our Kings, offspring of a line of heroes, were living at Paris in the most perfect tranquillity, amid pleasure and pomp. They seldom occupied their rooms, or were seen at Versailles waiting on the King, except on great days of ceremony. I shall certainly not give a history of these Princes, who have left such various reputations, and shall only here make a short mention of the Duke of Orleans, and the Duke de Penthièvre, reserving a special chapter for the Duke d'Enghien, as I have been able to collect some authentic and interesting particulars of his death.

The Duke of Orleans, who afterwards played such a miserable part during the events of the Revolution, was only notorious at that time for his immorality, his prodigality, and his immense wealth. Though his face was covered with an unpleasant mask of inflamed pimples, it was hard to find a more noble carriage or active figure, more conciliating address or pleasant conversation. He was always particular about his toilette, in which there were some special peculiarities; it was pervaded by the foreign taste

that the Prince had acquired in his travels in England, and especially displayed in his equipages.

No one ever had a more splendid fortune or independent position. It was undeniably preferable to that of any of the members of the royal family; and but for the malice and hatred that fermented in his heart, the Duke of Orleans might have been the happiest man in the kingdom. I cannot tell whether these passions of his were the fruits of the rebuffs to his vanity in the refusal of the place of high-admiral, and the rupture of the projected marriage of his daughter to the Duke d'Angoulême, or arose from unbridled ambition. In very truth revenge is not often so furiously pursued.

If on some occasions when the path to the throne might have been open, there was a want of energy in the Duke of Orleans; it may be said that there was no want of courage on others, when there was no need for it to be accompanied by the sense or calm reflection necessary to the leader of a party.

On all occasions of ceremony this Prince made himself remarkable by his appearance and exceeding magnificence. When he appeared on horseback in the uniform of Colonel-General of the Hussars, he eclipsed all his splendid troop of followers.

I shall not attempt to penetrate the secrets of his Palais Royal; his transgressions were so carelessly concealed as to have become sufficiently notorious, and to try to give particulars would be to try to write so many novels.

The political conduct of the Duke of Orleans was completely unveiled by him at the royal sitting of

November 19, 1787. The King was painfully affected by it. The King was too moral to like the Duke of Orleans, and he could then see that his dissolute habits were not the only fault to be alleged against him, and that his projects had no lower an aim than the disturbance of the Monarchy.

The banishment to Villers-Cotterets, imposed on the Duke by the King, was more a mark of displeasure than a real punishment; and this insignificant decree was soon brought to an end by the Duchess of Orleans. That Princess had the influence of virtue in her favour, and thus gained the respect of all. From her seclusion and melancholy at the Palais Royal, deprived of her children, whose education her husband, contrary to all custom or decency, had entrusted to a lady\* reputed to be his mistress, Madame d'Orleans seldom came to Court, but frequently visited her father, the noble Duke de Penthièvre, to re-animate her courage by his advice.

The treacherous plots of the Duke of Orleans, during the Revolution, are known to every one. After the 5th of October, 1789, he was so much detested that he had to fly to England, and only returned for the Federation of 1790; and then hardly dared show himself, remaining all day at a distance from the throne, concealed among the deputies.

He also kept away from the château, where every one made it a study to insult him in the most cutting ways as the meanest of men. On the first day of the year 1791, when it was his duty to be at Court for the procession of the Cordon Bleu, he kept away,

\* The celebrated Madame de Genlis.

and sent his two elder sons, the Dukes of Chartres and Montpensier. The third, the Count de Beaujolais, had not received that decoration. Whilst waiting for the *levée* in the saloon, the two Princes received all manner of affronts. There was a ring made round the fire to keep them out; sarcasms were poured out on their tricolour cockades, which they and the Count d'Estaing alone wore, instead of the green cockade of the order of the Saint Esprit. When they appeared before the King, the eldest presented his father's excuses, but did not allege any reason but a hunting party. Louis XVI. received it with such displeasure and coldness that the Duke of Orleans did not venture the next day to absent himself from the mass for the deceased knights. The insults were repeated, and were so cutting that he begged M. de Lafayette to save him. The sallow-complexioned general, delighted at getting an opportunity of humbling the Prince, with whom he had quarrelled, turned to the members of his staff, and said to them, "Gentlemen, protect this gentleman, as he cannot defend himself."

The children of the Duke of Orleans seldom came to Court. The elder imbibed false principles, that took them all lengths, from a woman full alike of ability and error. The Count de Beaujolais alone was saved by his own disposition; and it is very remarkable to observe how different was this youth's conduct from that of his brothers.

The other princes of the blood were always at Paris, or on their properties. They, too, did not attend the Court much, except on days of cere-



mony and custom; and they were only distinguished from the mass of courtiers by some differences of form in reception.

The famous duel between the Duke de Bourbon and the Count d'Artois, for an insult to the Duchess de Bourbon at a ball, took place before my arrival at Versailles: it did much honour to the prince, and he was considered right in his desire to defend his wife from insult, though she had been to blame first. Perhaps this was the only occasion that any of the princes gave proof of conjugal respect. Indeed, the Duke of Orleans was the only one not openly separated from his wife. The Duchess of Bourbon, his sister, did not live with her husband, neither did the Princess de Conti with hers.

Virtue seemed to have taken refuge beneath the roof of the Duke de Penthièvre, endeavouring to find consolation in the company of his daughter-in-law, the unfortunate Princess de Lamballe, for the premature death of his only son, who had been hurried to the grave with the most refined wickedness by the treacherous counsels of his brother-in-law, the Duke of Orleans. Indeed, by making the young Prince de Lamballe join in his debauches, he had killed him at twenty, and thus found himself in the position of sole heir to the fair and vast succession of the Duke de Penthièvre, who thenceforth spent his life at Eu, at Sceaux, or at Vernon, in benevolence, study, and friendship.

Madame de Lamballe was sincerely attached to the Queen, and she returned to France, in consequence of this friendship, to meet a most cruel



death, by which the Duke of Orleans was further enriched.

The Duke de Penthièvre, a descendant of the Count of Toulouse, a natural son of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan, was only distinguished from the princes of the blood by a label on his escutcheon, and a line that separated his house from that of the princes legitimately descended from our ancient kings in the genealogy of the royal family.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN.

THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN was born at Chantilly, on the 2nd of August, 1772; so he was still very young when I arrived at Versailles. I saw him receive the blue ribbon a short time after his first Communion, as I had seen it received by the Dukes d'Angoulême, of Chartres, and Montpensier.

I have since had an opportunity of seeing the Prince, but very far from Versailles; and the only fault that could then be cast up against him was what few princes of the posterity of Henry IV. were free from,—that of yielding too often to the fascination of beautiful eyes.

Whilst I was living at the little town of Rudesheim, on the Rhine, in 1792, this prince, who was at the other side, at Bingen, often came in disguise to see us, with his aide-de-camp. It was less on our account than on that of a tailor's little daughter, for while the aides-de-camp were ordering clothes of the father, the Duke was making love to the daughter. This unfortunate Prince was besides as brave as the great Condé, and the couplet of the old

song might be applied to him as well as to the good Henry :—

This devilish wight  
Is triply endowned,  
He can drink, he can fight,  
Is of gallantries proud.

The Duke d'Engbien perished by one of those crimes that will never be forgotten, however long silence may cover them. It was in 1804. He had long been living at Ettenheim, on the banks of the Rhine, opposite Strasburg. It would now be difficult to discover the motive that had drawn him so near the frontiers of France; but it may be supposed that he had some notion of drawing near in consequence of the conspiracy that was set up by Generals Pichegru and Moreau. However that might be, his presence gave great umbrage to the First Consul, and his arrest was resolved on.

The little court of the Prince had been alarmed by the discovery of several spies, and reports from Strasburg; but he himself, firm and intrepid, blushed at the idea of apparently yielding to fear, though really to prudence, and resolved to await the event. Several of his officers had left him when they saw he was so determined not to go away.

The First Consul commissioned General Armand de Caulaincourt, whose family had been from time immemorial in the receipt of benefits from the house of Condé, with the direction of the operations. In order to evade this stain of ingratitude, a pretence has been set up that Caulaincourt declined this

commission, on the excuse of a wound caused by the kick of a horse, and that he was only induced to incur this terrible responsibility by the threats of the First Consul, and other reasons that it is not my place to judge of.

On the 15th of March, the general passed the Rhine with a large division. He was perfectly informed of the condition of the Prince's house, by the reports of the spies. A few days before, one of them, being sharply pursued, had only made his escape by throwing away a sealed packet, that was picked up as soon as possible in hopes of finding the secret of the plot, but it only contained white paper.

A column surrounded the house, two officers got in by a window. The Prince's attempts at defence were vain; he was disarmed, arrested, placed on a horse, and carried off with such haste that his own hat was lost, and he was obliged to cover his head with a police cap that an officer of the detachment gave him. Thus he entered into the citadel of Strasburg by the Gate de Secours. On the 16th, early in the morning, the prisoner was forwarded to Paris in a post-chaise. The journey was continued day and night, without taking the least rest; and on the 20th, at half-past four in the afternoon, the gates of Paris were reached, at the Barrière Saint-Martin. A courier met them there, who gave orders to pass along the walls and go to Vincennes, which was reached at five o'clock.

It is reported that Havel, who had been appointed commander of the castle for denouncing the con-

spirators Cerachi and Arena, in the month Vendémiaire of the year nine, said to his wife when he saw the convoy, "I do not know who is the prisoner they are bringing me, but it is a large number of men to secure his person." Some say the lady was a natural daughter of the Duke de Bourbon, and her curiosity having been aroused by her husband's remarks, she at once advanced and, recognising the Duke d'Enghien, cried out, "It is my foster-brother!"

The prince was worn out with fatigue and want, and only made a very slight meal. Whilst eating, he begged them to have a foot-bath prepared for him next day when he awoke. The poor man little knew that his moments were numbered, and that there would be no morrow for him. So he threw himself upon a bed that was hastily prepared in a room on the entresol, near a window with two broken panes, that were stopped at his request with a napkin, and speedily fell into a sound asleep. About eleven at night he was suddenly aroused, and led to a chamber in the centre block of the castle, looking to the wood. There it was that a military commission composed of eight officers had been sent to prepare a criminal information against him with the penalty of death.

The treacherous judges who gave their votes in this fearful trial were Hullin, General of Brigade, commanding the Foot Grenadiers of the Guard, president; Guiton, Colonel of the First Regiment of Cuirassiers; Bazancourt, Colonel of the Fourth Regiment of Light Infantry; Ravier, Colonel of

the 18th Regiment of Infantry of the Line; Rabbe, Colonel of the 2nd Regiment of the Municipal Guard of Paris; Barrois, Colonel of the 96th Regiment of Infantry of the Line.

Dautancourt, Captain-Major of the picked gendarmes, performing the office of Judge-Advocate, and accordingly obliged to read the sentence, and order it to be carried into effect, was no doubt the dependent of the house of Condé, whose name was long unknown, and whom I will immediately recur to.

And last, Molin, Captain in the 18th of the Line, Secretary, all nominated by Murat, General-in-Chief, Governor of Paris.

The six principal facts raised in the indictment, and laid to the charge of the Prince were, 1st.—Having born arms against the French Republic. 2nd.—Having offered his services to the English Government, the enemy of the French people. 3rd.—Having received and given credit to the agents of the said Government, having procured it the means of establishing communications in France, and having conspired with it against the internal and external security of the State. 4th.—Having placed himself at the head of an assemblage of French emigrants, and others in the pay of England, gathered on the frontiers of France, in the territory of Fribourg. 5th.—Having arranged intelligences in Strasburg tending to cause revolt in the surrounding departments, in order to produce a diversion in favour of England there. 6th. and last, having been one of the fosterers and

accomplices of the conspiracy against the life of the First Consul, framed by the English.

The Prince answered with the utmost coolness and courage. He said, "I fought among my family to recover the inheritance of my ancestors; but since peace has been made, I have laid down my arms, and recognised that there are no more kings in Europe."

It is said that the judges were struck with such nobility, and hesitated a moment; that they wrote to the First Consul, and that he sent back the letter with these words only: "Condemned to death." This further atrocity must not be admitted. Doubtless the judges had their instructions; and, even had time permitted, they could never have dared to interrupt the sleep of the Dictator—that is, if he could rest during this night of murder.

However it may be, the judges pronounced an affirmative verdict on every point. It is to be noticed that the sentence makes no mention of any witnesses being heard either for prosecution or defence. The haste of the indictment rendered it impossible to clothe it with all these forms, and they might have enabled the accused to bring his means of defence to bear.

It was four when the Prince left the room. He was then led to the place of execution, going down into the ditch by a steep and dark stair. It is believed that the officer who led him was the same Dautancourt whom I have mentioned above. He had been warned in the night to head



a detachment for Vincennes ; having been brought up in the house of Condé, and not entirely forgotten it, he could not learn the duty he had to perform without some sorrow. The Prince is said to have recognised him, and while expressing his pleasure at the meeting, the officer veiled his eyes and wept.

However, the Prince, as he passed through these damp underground caverns, turned to the leader of the detachment and said, "Are they going to plunge me alive into a dungeon?" "No, Sir; you need not expect that," replied he, with a sob. They continued the death-march. At last the Duke thought he saw the preparations for execution, and said, "Thanks be to heaven, I shall die a soldier's death."

Among those who had to be present at this miserable execution, the commander of the detachment was not the only one bound in gratitude to the Condés. The governor's wife, as I have said, owed her fortune to them; so she expressed the most acute sorrow when she saw him pass on his way to death. Her husband told her, "Be comforted; the noise you will hear is only to frighten him."

Immediately after the reading of the sentence, the unfortunate Prince asked for religious assistance; it is asserted that an insulting smile was the only answer he obtained. They may have told him, "At this time all the priests are in bed." The Prince was indignant, and did not reply a word. He knelt down, and after an instant's meditation, got up, and said, "I am ready."

It is unlikely that Generals Murat and Savary should have been present at the execution, as has been reported. The well-known character of the latter for kindness gives the lie to this assertion, as far as relates to him alone. It was to Hullin that the prince gave a portrait and a lock of his hair intended for his wife, Mademoiselle de Rohan, whom he had married in England without ever having made the marriage public, and who, it has been alleged, was then in France. Hullin showed this portrait at a dinner-party a few days afterwards.

The Duke d'Enghien was shot in the eastern part of the ditch of the castle, at the entrance into a little garden. He was immediately thrown, dressed as he was, into a grave that had been dug the evening before, at eight o'clock, while he was at supper. The pick and shovel had been borrowed of one of the forest-keepers. It was half-past four when the iniquitous work was completed.

All calculations had been made with cruel precision for burying this crime in the shades of night. The sudden capture and hasty journey had been intended to avoid petitions and consideration. Fouché, the Police Minister, and Réal, the Counsellor of State, had directed the plot; and the First Consul remained deaf to all the representations of his family.

The sentence was the more atrocious because no papers that could establish the existence of a plot or conspiracy had been found upon any of the persons arrested; among others the Baron de Reich,

taken at Strasburg, and already known for his connexion with General Pichegru at the time of the 19th Fructidor.

Foreign Courts made haste to offer the usual prayers to Heaven for the repose of the soul of this unfortunate prince. The Abbé de Bouvens preached his funeral sermon in London before the Count d'Artois, taking for his text this passage of Maccabees:—"And when Tryphon went about to get the kingdom . . . that he might set the crown upon his own head . . . he was afraid that Jonathan would not suffer him, and that he would fight against him, wherefore he sought a way how to take Jonathan, that he might kill him."—I. Macc. c. xvi., 39, 40.

The report of the exhumation of this unhappy prince, on the 21st of March, 1816, confirmed the chief of the details that I have given of this atrocious crime. Information of the site of the grave had been obtained from eye-witnesses; and the deposition of an old peasant, eighty years of age, who had himself dug the grave two hours after the arrival of the Prince in the fort.

The search had hardly been commenced when a boot, in a good state of preservation, was found, and the bones of the foot and leg in it. Then the head was found, and the direction in which the body was placed could be seen. The face was turned downwards; one leg had remained in an almost vertical position, the arms were twisted back. A portion of the hair was also picked up. A large stone seemed to have been intentionally

thrown on the head, as the bones were crushed. All these remains were placed on a bier, and enclosed in a coffin.

A number of German ducats were also found, a leather purse with a louis and some pieces of silver in it, and a ring and gold chain that the Prince was in the habit of wearing on his neck. The Chevalier Jacques, who had been arrested with the Prince, had said beforehand that these things would be found if the victim had not been plundered; and the ducats were found, with the sealing-wax the Prince had used to enclose them when they were parted in the citadel of Strasburg.

A bullet-hole was observed through the shoulder blade-bone, and another in the fragments of the cap the Prince wore at the moment of the execution. The hussar boots were in good preservation, and all the bones were found except one molar tooth, which no doubt had been missing a long time. The flesh alone was consumed.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE MARSHAL DE RICHELIEU.

AS page of the chamber I was under his orders. I saw the extraordinary man who was the constant favourite of the kings for three reigns, one of which lasted nearly sixty years; who almost as soon as he left the cradle beheld the fortune of wealth, the roses of love, and the laurels of glory descend in a shower upon him. I saw him in his later years; and in taking him to his last abode I saw the famous vault of the Sorbonne, the tomb of his family, opened for him, where the phantom of the great Armand, still fierce and menacing, seemed to advance to receive his great nephew. Like the immortal Cardinal he ruled over the hearts of his masters, but in quite a different way; not so much by the ascendancy of a powerful mind over a weak spirit as by his amiable qualities. With a more careful education, an infancy less indulged, and a few more reverses of fortune, he might have been able to rule the minds of his masters, like his great uncle.

It seems I was destined this year to see the mortal remains of all our great ministers, as I followed

the coffin of the Duke de Fleury to Saint Thomas of the Louvre, and saw it laid in the vault of Cardinal Fleury; and if I had followed a Mazarin to his last abode, I should have seen the remains of the three greatest Ministers of France; who every one of them reigned as masters, proving by their example that the same end may be gained by sternness, by tact, and by gentleness.

I will not recur to the Marshal de Richelieu at the Court of Louis XIV., fed with sugar-plums in Madame de Maintenon's rooms, when there were not many beauties able to continue cruel to him, even under the wing of virtue. Neither will I pursue him in his many amorous expeditions, nor to Mahon and Closter-Seven, where he gained the crown of victory; I leave the void to his biographers mediocre as they are. I only saw him in his decline, and it may be said, on the brink of the grave, but still master of the gaiety, kindliness, and vivacity that caused his success in politics and love.

He was not much to be seen at the Court of Louis XVI., and appeared in the elaborate dress of his youth when he did come. He had no difficulty in walking; he even affected a lively step, a perfect contrast to that of his son the Duke de Fronsac, who could hardly drag himself along, he was so gouty and infirm, though thirty years younger than his father. But the successes of the one had been at Court, while the other sought his amid the vilest debauchery.

The Marshal, when nearly eighty, had taken the

beautiful Madame de Roth for his third wife, who by this marriage wanted to make a fortune for her two children—a daughter, afterwards married to the Marquis de Ravenel, and a son, a page of the chamber.

The Marshal was no longer able to perform his duties of first gentleman of the chamber from ill health, as they were sometimes very tiring. It is also well known that he was very careful of himself, and that he was as much pleased with the reputation for gallantry as with the reality. His notorious baths of milk at Bordeaux will be remembered, and that for a time they disgusted the town with the use of milk, because it was said that his servants sold it after being used. That was a bad joke, repeated from the feudal ages. Indeed, I believe the same fancy was attributed to a lady of the house of Rohan, abbess of Marquëite, and that she had her nuns' bread and milk made of that which she had used for her bath. When the Marshal entered Bordeaux as governor of the province, he had his horses shod with silver shoes, slightly attached with nails, and the servants were forbidden to pick up any that fell off. The Marshal was a perfect specimen of a great lord by this nobility and magnificence, appropriate to a large fortune; he set an example in this, as well as in amiability and grace.

His son performed the duties of his office, though more decrepit than his father. He had become a walking corpse from his debauchery; corruption exhaled from his livid lips; he could only walk or rather drag himself with difficulty by the help of a



stick. With such a repulsive exterior, and an exceedingly irascible temper, he had obtained pretty Mademoiselle Gallifet in marriage, and had two daughters by her. He followed his father to the grave in a very short time; I think he died in 1792; at least he was performing the duties of his office in the early part of that year.

The old Marshal looked on his grandson with greater pleasure — the Count de Chinon, sprung from a former marriage of the Duke de Fronsac with Mademoiselle de Saisfield.\* He inherited the grace of his grandfather, as well as his military talents. Married quite young to the very deformed Mademoiselle de Rochechouart, the great name of Richelieu will probably become extinct in him. It may be seen that he is a worthy successor to the victor of Mahon by the glory he knew how to reap at the Siege of Ismailof, when he was obliged by force of circumstances to enter into the Russian service, where he is a lieutenant-general.

The Marshal de Richelieu was born in 1696, and was only eighteen years old when he was sent to the Bastille for the first time, because he would not live with his wife, Mademoiselle de Noailles.

\* We reproduce the text exactly, though it is here quite incorrect. The first wife of the Duke de Fronsac was Adélaïde Gabrielle de Hautefort, whom he married on the 25th of February, 1764, and who died of fever on the 3rd of February, 1767. The Count de Chignon, afterwards Duke de Richelieu, was born of this marriage, on the 25th of September, 1766. The second marriage of the Duke de Fronsac with Mademoiselle Gallifet, took place in the month of April, 1776, and the Duke had two daughters who were Madame de Jumilhac and Madame de Montcalm.

Madame de Maintenon patronised both families, and hoped that this imprisonment would conquer his antipathy and transgressions. But neither for youth nor tedium would he yield, though his pretty wife was present weeping to him, having come to his prison on the plea of consolation, to offer him a means of deliverance that many people would have been glad to take advantage of. He was Marshal of France at fifty-two, had the blue ribbon at thirty-three, and died at the age of nearly ninety-three, on the 8th of September, 1788.

Though an immense reputation has attached to his name during his long career, up to this time the histories that have been written of him are very poor. A light and sportive pen like that of Hamilton was needed to narrate the intrigues where love and politics always went together. A few years before the Marshal's death, a little piece called "Debts" was produced on the stage of the *Comédie Italienne*. An actor called Narboune, who played the part of guardian, thought it a hit to adopt the dress and manner of the old Marshal; and this was so cleverly carried out, that the allusion was at once understood, and the name of Richelieu repeated all over the house. The Duke de Fronsac had the inspectorship of this theatre, as Gentleman of the Bedchamber; he dismissed the impertinent actor, and would not allow him to appear again till after his father's death.

The office of First Gentleman of the Bedchamber was instituted by Francis I., in 1545, in place of that of Chamberlain. They were then two in

number; Louis XIII. increased them to four. There were Chamberlains under Charles VII., and an ordinance of that reign mentions them in these terms, which perfectly describe their functions—"Chamberlains putting us to bed." Louis XIV. excused his first gentlemen of the bedchamber from sleeping in his room. This duty was really wearisome, and was transferred to the first servants of the bedchamber, who in this employment very often found means of gaining their master's confidence.

In my time, the four first gentlemen serving by the year were the Duke de Villequier, and remainder to his son, the Duke de Piennes; the Marshal Duras, and the Marquis de Duras, his grandson; the Duke de Fleury, and the Marquis de Fleury, his grandson; the Duke de Richelieu, the Duke de Fronsac, and the Count de Chinon.

The first gentleman took the place of Grand Chamberlain when he was absent. Besides their duty at the King's rising and retiring, they had the inspection and direction of entertainments, balls, and representations given at the Court, and kept the accounts of the King's chamber and the petty expenses; they also had charge of presentations, and showed the King any objects of art that were sent him. Each place was worth at least from eighteen to twenty thousand francs.

## CHAPTER XI.

MADAME DUBARRY.

I HAVE seen Madame Dubarry too. At the death of Louis XV., this former sultana and favourite was treated by his successor, Louis XVI., with a kindness that arose from his gentle disposition and respect for his grandfather. No anger was exhibited against her, and nothing was recovered from her but a service of gold plate that had been extracted from the late King in his weakness, and was considered an inalienable heirloom of the Crown. She was allowed to keep all her great wealth, and also to reside anywhere she chose, with the exception of places ordinarily visited by the Court. Madame Dubarry settled in her house at Luciennes, a village two miles from Versailles, near Marly, either from an especial affection for this delightful spot, or as a specimen of the effrontery so common in the lowly class whence she had been raised by a Monarch's caprice.

Indeed, no dwelling-place could have been more delightful to its owner. The house was plain, though splendidly furnished. The park was not very large; but the principal attractions were the magnificent

ranges of the immense view over the beautiful plain,

Where winds the Seine without the city bounds.

The eye there commanded a crowd of villages and country houses, two great roads, the forest of Vesinet, and further still the ancient castle of Saint Germain, on its height, recalling the weakness of Louis XIII., while the peaks of the castle of Rueil brought recollections of his inflexible minister, whose transcendent ability and talents cannot so exclusively occupy the mind as to shut out the occasional remembrance of the injustice and intrigues concocted and hatched in this castle. The Marly water-engine at the foot of that hill, so steep that care is requisite in descending it even on foot, made this part of the landscape more animated by its motion, while the incomparable picture was bounded to the east by the great city and cloud of haze.

And as if enough had not been done by nature to embellish this charming abode, all the arts had been summoned to aid in the construction of a pavilion where the whole of human industry was represented. Every profession had done more than its best ; there was nothing, down to the very iron-work, that was not a model of delicacy and taste. But the presence of two of the best works of modern sculpture would have been enough to render the locality famous—a Diana of Allégrin, in which the marble seemed to have become pliant to the wish of the artist, and a Venus leaving the Bath, of no less admirable execution.

Owing to the miserable events of our time, we always behold a spectre raised by some unhappy remembrance appear in the most smiling pictures. This pavilion recalls the fate of the young Maussabre, aide-de-camp of the Duke de Brissac, who was discovered there in the month of September, 1792. It was pure curiosity that led the band of brigands ranging the country to visit the pavilion of Luciennes; they dragged that officer out, and took him to the Abbaye, where he was murdered.

But without searching for remembrances foreign to my subject, the woman who owned this shrine of luxury, who had seen the whole court at her feet through the caprice of their master, who had seen a duke (the Duke de Gesvres) mean enough to take advantage of his deformity, to cause himself to be called the favourite's monkey; this woman having survived her fall, even she was the victim of the scythe of the revolution. Like men of talent and virtue she was torn from her retreat, and from the bosom of luxury dragged to the depths of a dungeon, and then to the scaffold, where she showed a weakness which was the more surprising from its rarity in those days of blood and mourning, when Madame Joseph de Monaco put on rouge to go to the scaffold, and when so many more cried "Vive le roi," as they received the death blow.

In our distant excursions we often went as far as Luciennes. One of our comrades, M. de Sainte Hermine, was a godson of Madame Dubarry and of M. d'Aiguillon. He always went to see his godmother, and she gave us an excellent collation, and came herself to invite us to enjoy it.



She was still beautiful, though more than forty years old. When one looked at her beautiful eyes and charming smile, one would have found an explanation, and comprehended how a great king had loved her, if the remembrance of her abject origin had not been in haste to obtrude itself, and with equal speed the recollection of her vulgar cynicism and foul language, imbibed from the conversation of the loose women of the Pont aux Choux, that made her use to her illustrious lover, stooping so low as to prepare her breakfast, the well-known expression, "France, take care your coffee——"

As for me, being brought up in great love and respect for our kings, I must say that what struck my young mind most about Madame Dubarry was to see a portrait of Louis XV. in the antechamber. I thought that such a situation derogated from respect as well as gratitude.

Madame Dubarry was much beloved at Luciennes, and did a great deal of good there, kindness of heart is one of the most common qualities of the class of persons from among whom she had risen. She often gave entertainments to the villagers in her park; and the people remembering that they had often seen the Sovereign at her feet in their frequent drives to Luciennes, and forming all their opinions by the outside, admired her condescension and forgetfulness of her grandeur.

Madame Dubarry had lost the vulgarity of her former condition by her stay at Court. Her grace, ease, and a slight peculiar provincial dialect, were the



means of hiding ignorance and bad education, in her as in many courtesans.

Of all her ancient admirers the two who did not abandon her in her disgrace, and were always her friends, were the Duke de Brissac and the Marshal de Richelieu. The first was bold and generous enough to think it mean to abandon in her misfortunes one he had worshipped for love of his king. The Duke de Brissac was a knight of the time of Philip Augustus, at the Court of Louis XV. As for the Marshal, it was he who had raised her from obscurity; and besides the inclination of his own heart he, perhaps, in this, acted in obedience to the orders of the late King, who recommended his favourite on his death-bed, foreseeing that she would be quite abandoned.

The story of the poor Marshal's agony on the day of Madame Dubarry's presentation is well known. A hairdresser was late, and in consequence made all the Court wait, where a very large and eager multitude had come to see a loose woman, clothed with the name of a husband whom she hardly knew, audaciously present herself before the best of France.

The time had gone by; the King was impatient, and afraid that any delay would give opportunity for fresh attempts of his faithful subjects jealous of his fame, as well as of his daughters, whose virtue he respected. The Marshal, in trouble and despair, saw that this delay would ruin his protégée, and the intrigue would fail if the presentation did not take place. The true friends of Louis XV. were already

triumphant, when just at the moment of dismissing the Court, he cast a last look out of the window, and at once cried out, "Here is the Countess Dubarry." He had, indeed, recognised her livery. The Marshal recovered himself; the success of his friend became assured. She soon was recognised as the King's mistress, and had the rooms of Madame de Pompadour, situated above the King's, and afterwards occupied by the Duke de Villequier. They communicated with the royal apartments by the staircase on the right of the Marble Court; but the real entrance was by a narrow and dark stair, and though the suite of rooms was larger than any at Versailles, it was very inconvenient, for candles were wanted in several of the chambers if the weather was at all cloudy.

It was a very common report at Versailles that Louis XV. contracted the malady of which he died from the daughter of the gardener at Luciennes, whom Madame Dubarry had introduced to him, for the smallpox came out on her a few hours afterwards. It may be supposed possible that Madame Dubarry lent herself to this iniquity from her interest in preserving the King's love; but is it possible that an aged king, even when led astray by his senses, could advance to such a pitch of license as to be a corrupter of youth? I cannot think so; so many calumnious reports were then in circulation, that I am inclined to attribute the same character to this. Let the world think what it likes about this common report (I have discovered it very widespread), and make any reflexions about it that may

be suggested, as if it had a foundation. Anyhow, it is due to Madame Dubarry to say, that her conduct after the death of Louis XV. was as decent and regular as possible, in externals, at least; and that, if she gave him a successor in her heart, it was with the precautions that the King's memory required, and so that the public never knew anything about it.

## PLACES.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE PAGES.

THE imagination always recurs with delight to the happy days of youth. In the thorny paths of life, a moment of sweet satisfaction is often felt in turning the thoughts to these peaceful years of tender age when the only sorrow was to be thwarted in some little project, when privations were so short, and tears so soon forgotten.

I was brought up in the midst of an abundance of pleasures, in one of those establishments whose aim was to perpetuate the traditions of ancient chivalry. How often, in my troubled life, have I felt a sweet pleasure in recalling the recollections of my earlier years. Perhaps, alas ! the bitterness of those that followed contributed to make these more dear to me. However it may be, nothing touches my heart like the thought of these times of happiness. This is my chapter in which I take delight. May its length and possible want of interest, be forgiven ; to me there is keen enjoyment in all the matter it contains.

What an advantage for youth were these great establishments, where the scions of nobility imbibed heroism and attachment to their king in the midst of the Court! And how wide did these advantages extend, as when I came to Versailles there were pages to the number of a hundred and fifty-eight there, besides those of the princes of the blood who resided in Paris!

At first I was placed among the pages of the King's chamber. Four years afterwards, through reforms and arrangements, I was shifted to the great stable; so I can speak of the duties of both positions, as well as the internal management of this establishment, which was not one of the least remarkable things to see.

The pages of the chamber were eight in number. Their service was entirely within the castle, and did not require height or strength; so it was undertaken at a very early age, and I have known some who began at nine years old. Two governors and a tutor had the task of superintending their education; and, thanks to their small number, this education was much superior to that given to the pages of the stable, which, I must say, left much to be desired.

Formerly, the first gentlemen of the bedchamber had the direction of the pages; each of them had six, who only served for one year. But, in 1781, it was perceived that this plan of service was inconvenient in several ways, both on account of their education, and of the expense; so the number of pages was reduced to eight, and they were

made permanent; and instead of giving them lodgings as before, in the hotels of the first gentlemen to whom they were attached, a special lodging was assigned to them in the Rue de l'Orangerie.

To be received as page, it was necessary to prove at least two hundred years of direct noble descent, and to have an allowance of six hundred livres for minor expenses. Then the parents were delivered from any further care; clothing, food, masters, attendance in sickness, all were furnished with truly royal magnificence.

One dress alone for a page of the chamber cost fifteen hundred livres; for it was of crimson velvet, with gold embroidery on all the seams. The hat was trimmed with a feather and a broad piece of point d'Espagne. They had, besides, an undress suit of scarlet cloth, with gold and silver lace.

The service of the pages of the chamber consisted in being present at the grand levee of the King, going to mass with him, lighting him on returning from hunting, and attending his retiring to give him his slippers. I will subsequently describe the manner in which this curious service was performed, for it was quite unique to make two children stay up to hand slippers. But if the prince had allowed relaxation on any points under the pretext of special reasons, we should soon have seen the disappearance of all the majesty that should surround the throne and sovereign.

The economical spirit of Cardinal de Brienne did not forget the pages. Forty pages of the private stable and two of the chase disappeared from Ver-

sailles, as a preliminary to the subsequent destruction of the other establishments of this nature by the Revolution. There was only the great stable left, and its fifty pages had to perform the whole service of the Court, even that of the pages of the chamber, who did not escape overthrow, though their number was so small; and we were all so young that we were transferred to the grand stable.

I should find it very hard to describe this noisy collection properly, and to characterise the kind of government that obtained among them. The authority of the elders over the new ones made it a kind of oligarchy; but the harshness of this authority, the profound submission required to be shown, made it approach to a despotism, while the license that reigned among the members of this young society, and the slight respect they professed for the governor, gave it the appearance of a republic, if not of complete anarchy. So our education came to nothing, though there were numbers of masters and professors. It was a bad thing for anyone who went there without a taste for self-instruction. He would leave a good dancer, a good fencer, a good rider; but with lax morals and plenty of ignorance. A little compensation for these evils was to be found in an excellent temper, rendered docile by the severe education the juniors received from the seniors.

I will first mention the superb lodgings that were allotted to us, then the service; and will conclude with the usages of our house, regulated by laws that were more sacred than if they had been written on



marble and bronze, because they were sustained by the authority transmitted to the seniors from generation to generation from time immemorial.

All the right side of the great stable was taken up with our lodgings. On the ground-floor there was a very pretty chapel, a great hall for exercise, the offices, the kitchens, and the dining-room, with two billiard tables in it. This last room was vast and dark, its massive vault rested on four pillars, it was lighted by lamps, and must, by its appearance, and still more by the noise that was made there, have resembled the cavern of Gil Blas. At least there was equally good cheer there. We were divided between four tables, and the King allowed the steward eighty thousand francs a year for food, light, and the fire in three or four stoves.

On the first-floor, in equal rank, in an enormous gallery, were ranged the fifty chambers where we slept, all painted yellow and varnished, and furnished uniformly. As these chambers only reached half up the story, there was a kind of gallery above arranged like the boxes of a theatre, and used as a wardrobe. Four enormous stoves were placed at the ends, and their pipes passing over the chambers made them sufficiently warm. At the end of the gallery a great hall, well warmed, served for a study. The two under-governors, the preceptor, and the almoner had their rooms in the garrets, and the linen was kept there also. Our library was situated there, and was open for two hours a day for the changing of books and the reading of the public papers. There were also there a collection of maps,

objects for drawing from, and scientific instruments.

The pages of the state-stable wore the King's livery as their uniform, that is to say, blue coats covered with crimson and white silk lace. But eighteen of them, chosen by the grand equerry, who had to superintend the supply of horses, had blue coats with gold lace, red waistcoat and breeches. Whether the pockets went across or upright marked the difference of the great and lesser stables. Two of them always went before the princesses when they went out; with a third, one of those with the lace and who was called *surtout*, to bear the train of the dress; they rode as the escort when the princesses went out in the carriage.

When the King went out shooting, all the *surtouts* had to be at the meet. They took off their coats, and put on little vests of blue drill and leather gaiters, and each bearing a gun, they kept behind the prince, who, after firing, took another gun while the empty one was passed from hand to hand to the armourer to load. Meanwhile, the first page had the game picked up, and kept an exact account in a little note-book; and as soon as the sport was over he went to the King's study to take orders for its distribution. It may well be supposed that this was a very pleasant post; besides the advantage of having a special work to do for the King, like a little minister, the first page got a good many for himself, as Louis XVI. every day that he went out killed some four or five hundred head. We also received a dozen bottles of champagne on these occasions.

On days of grand ceremonies the pages were in a carriage with two horses; and when the King or Princes wished to send to inquire after anyone, or pay their compliments on any family event, a page, followed by a groom, carried the message.

With the army, the pages became aides-de-camps to the aides-de-camp of the King, and learnt from the fountain of command how to command at a future day. They also carried the King's armour, while it was still the fashion to wear a cuirass. Every page leaving the service after three or four years, had the right to choose a sub-lieutenancy in any corps; and the leading pages of the King's chamber, of the stables, and of the Queen, had a troop of cavalry and a sword.

At home the gradation of pages was by three degrees. The seniors, having, after two years, absolute power over the fresh boys; the second year, a sort of hybrids, called *sénis*, who were not under orders, neither could give them; but if they behaved badly in the least thing to the seniors, order was given to the fresh boys to hold them under eight taps that delivered a large flow of water into a marble basin in the dining-room. The first year was passed in the noviciate of being a fresh boy, and a very severe noviciate it was! The most perfect and passive obedience was the first quality of a fresh boy; and many lads arriving from their country homes with very little of this notion about them, were received in a manner that pretty soon taught them. A fresh boy had no property; always ready to obey the slightest sign, even obliged to foresee the

desires of his senior, every fault that he was guilty of, even involuntarily, was immediately punished, either by a decree much more strictly kept than those of the governors, or by pages of German grammar to write out, or by stripes called *savates*,\* from the name of the instrument used to apply them. Not one of the names used in a college was employed among us. The words passages, refectories, classes, were scrupulously exchanged for corridors, halls of study, &c.; to mention the others would have been to endanger one's peace; and a fresh boy who called his comrade his "school-fellow," was called by that nickname all the time he was in the service.

Many people were displeased at this severity of the seniors towards the fresh boys, and thought it cruel. In truth, it was sometimes carried to excess; but when exercised with moderation, as I saw it, the effect was very good. A page never entered a regiment without being well thought of, and a general favourite. Besides, *freshness* was an ancient institution; it was known and approved by all the heads, many of whom had been pages, and consequently had experience of it. The ordeals the new boys had to undergo formerly, went beyond the greatest terrors exhibited by freemasonry. M. de la Bigne, equerry of the riding school, a page fifty years ago, still had on his back the print of a red hot spur with which he had been branded. I am far from approving of such cruelties, but what might seem incredible, was nevertheless true. A

\* *Savate*, an old shoe.

senior and a fresh boy meeting again in the world as equals were good friends. In my time, a fresh boy's duties were confined to perfect obedience, and a difference of rank, the universal consequence of seniority.

The great liberty enjoyed at the state-stable, the small amount of study, the spirit of independence that descended from generation to generation, all combined to make the youths conduct very irregular. Confinement and arrest only lasted for a time; the general spirit was permanent, and great severity would have been required to produce a reform.

Three hours of study in the morning and two after dinner, were the only time they could not ramble about the town; besides, they could go anywhere up to half-past nine at night, the hour of supper. The results of such license may easily be conceived. I found it pleasant enough at the time, but could not now look with approval on it.

Mass was said in the chapel every day; and two Capuchins of the Convent of Meudon had the duty of preaching and the direction of our consciences. Good heavens! what consciences! But though there was no great desire to confide the peccadilloes that had been perpetrated, there was a good deal more to hear the lectures one of them gave us—Father Chrysologus, a celebrated astronomer, whose works are now published under his real name—M. de Gy.

The mornings were employed in the riding school, when all the pages of Versailles attended. It was undeniably the most famous in Europe, both for the beauty of the horses and the skill of the riding-

masters. When I came, these horses were two hundred and forty in number, but they were afterwards reduced to one hundred. They were all very handsome, and were used on State occasions. Intractable by nature, not much used to the sun, excited by the noise, they often reduced their riders to desperation. For their common work the pages had a set of twenty or thirty light speedy horses. I should find it hard to say how many horses the King possessed ; but I should think that, before any retrenchment took place, their number must have amounted to three thousand. The riding-horses were at the great stable, and the carriage-horses at the smaller. The Master of the Horse in France was Charles de Lorraine, with the French title of Prince de Lambesc. His family was not recognised as royal, and he was not allowed the title of Highness. The Prince de Lambesc is now a General in the Austrian service ; he was a good soldier, firm, even harsh, but not the least cruel, as the Revolutionists tried to make him out. He was one of the best riders in France. At five o'clock in the morning, even in winter, he was at the riding-school, having it lighted up, breaking or teaching horses, and giving lessons. He gave me my first teaching ; in artistic language, he gave me my lunge. After the office of Constable was abolished, the Master of the Horse performed the duties. He then wore a dress of cloth of gold, and carried the King's sword in a scabbard of violet set with golden fleurs-de-lis.

Besides the beautiful horses at the great stable, the saddle-room was a sight ! There all the state



saddles were kept, and a quantity of antique arms and armour that had formerly been used in tournaments.

A little poem composed by M. de Cadrieux, page under Louis XIV., had been preserved among the pages for more than a century. The little work was written in a light and pleasant manner, and described the customs in use among the pages, their rules, and the way the day was spent. Every page's character was originally described in it. I had made some alterations that were required after so long, and substituted the portrait of the pages of my time; but this copy has been lost in my travels, and I feel sorry for it.

The Queen's pages, twelve in number, were clothed in red with gold lace. Monsieur and the Count d'Artois each had four pages of the chamber, and twelve of the stable, and their wives eight. Those of Monsieur and Madame were also in red and gold. The pages of the chamber were dressed in embroidered velvet; when the colours were the same, the difference was shown by the pattern of the lace. All these pages also had their governors and masters for mathematics, German, drawing, dancing, fencing, vaulting, athletics, and knowledge of horses, like us, besides the tutors' lessons. It is evident that if the education was bad it was not for want of means.

Many quarrels arose in consequence of the meeting of the pages at the riding-school and the theatre, and the duels were the more dangerous that they used sharp foils, which being square, made



a severe wound. And yet during nearly six years that I remained living at Versailles, no page died either of sickness or anything else. A surgeon who lived in the Rue de Chenil had a contract to take in the pages of the grand stable when they were ill. As it was very comfortable there, they went into the infirmary on the slightest pretext. The King paid five francs a day for each page, and the prescriptions of our doctors came from the court apothecary. It was curious that the garden, or one of the rooms of this house, was often chosen for settling disputes. At any rate assistance was close at hand.

In the winter of 1790 a dispute arose between the King's and the Prince's pages. It was agreed to let the time of the carnival pass, not to interfere with the pleasures of that period, and that the meeting should take place on Ash Wednesday at the Porte Saint Antoine, under pretence of a game of prisoners base on the road to Marly, and that each should measure himself against his chosen antagonist. The meeting took place on the appointed day. Two or three had been wounded when M. de Lambesse, page to the Countess d'Artois, afterwards known by the name of Golden Branch in the Chouan war, was so dangerously run through the lungs by M. de Montlezun that there was nothing else to be done but carry him back to Versailles, where he was bled seventeen times. The affair got wind, the governors met and endeavoured to appease the existing state of enmity and restore peace.

As these Recollections are destined to be the recreation of my declining years, I take a pleasure in giving here the names of the pages with whom I was brought up.

#### PAGES OF THE CHAMBER.

1785.

De Gueheneuc, a Breton massacred at Rennes during the first troubles.—Du Romain, a Breton squadron leader of gendarmerie in 1817. Boisé from the Bourbonnais. Du Blaisel, entered the Austrian service. Tuomelin, a Breton, his motto was the anagram of his name, "Nil metuo." Sainte-Hermine of Angoulême. De Bigny of Bourges, killed at Quiberon in the English service. Montleau of Angoulême, an officer of the Guards, émigré, then an actor at Hamburg till his return to France.

1786 and 1787.

Tuomelin. Sainte-Hermine. De Bigny. Montleau. The Chevalier de Gueheneuc, a Breton. De Molans of Franche-Comté. D'Hésecques of Picardy. Noaillan of Bordeaux, an officer in the Horse Grenadiers in 1814.

1788.

Sainte-Hermine. De Bigny. The Chevalier de Gueheneuc. De Molans. D'Hésecques. Noaillan. L'Espine of Avignon. Bounay of Nevers, son of the peer.

1789.

De Bigny. De Molans. D'Hésecques. Noaillan. L'Espine. Bounay. Boucher of Orleans. La Roque of Périgord.

On the 1st of January, 1790, the pages of the chamber were abolished, and placed among those of the great stable.

## PAGES OF THE STABLES.

1790.

*Leaders.*

Du Poérier, of Volognes. Chamisot. Saint Pol. Bernetz, a Vendean Chief, counsellor of the prefecture at Evreux. Saily, the Queens's head-page.

*Seniors.*

Lastours, first equerry to Madame in 1814. Saubnac. Vaillant. La Tude of Montpellier. Vaugiraud of the Sables d'Olonne, chief of the stud. Du Dressier. De Bigny. Giverville of Normandy. Nogent. Saint-Anlaire. D'Hésecques. Noaillan.

*Second Year.*

Diensie. Sarrazin. Boisfremont, a famous painter. Montlezun. Belatte of Angoulême. Longueval, died early. The Chevalier de Saint-Pol. Dartaise de Mekenem. Biencourt. Crandalle of Picardy, died at Bruges in 1793. Bourgogne of Flanders. Vanquelin. Cantwel of Paris, son of the translator of Gibbon. Conseil. Cacqueray a Norman, a Vendean chief, killed. The Chevalier de Chamissot, of Champagne, prefect of Lot, dismissed as a liberal. Sir Henry Swinburn, an Englishman. Chavigny. Bonnet de Belon. Le Douarin. Salvert. L'Espine of Avignon. Boucher. La Roque, of Périgord, an officer of the general staff.

*New boys.*

D'Apchier, Blocqueville of Normandy, a squadron leader in 1821. Grignon of Poitou, a Chouan chief, shot in 1799. D'Aubert. D'Hosier of Paris, condemned to death in the conspiracy of Pichegru and Moreau, but pardoned. Dampierre. Perdrauville. Bonnechose.

1791.

*Leaders.*

Saint Pol. Bernetz. Saubnac. Vaillant. Vaugirard the Queen's page.

*Seniors.*

Lastours. Dieusie. Sarrazin. Montlezun. Belatte. Longueval. Saint Pol. Dartaise. Biencourt. Crandalle. Borgogne. Vauquelin. Cantwel. Conseil. Cacqueray. Chamissot. Sir Henry Swinburn. Chavigny. Bonnet de Bélon. Le Douarin. Salvert. L'Espine. Boucher. La Roque.

*Second Year.*

D'Apchier. Bloqueville. Grignon. D'Aubert. D'Hosier. Dampierre. Perdrauville. Bonnechose.

*New boys.*

D'Albinac. The Chevalier de Lastours. Turpin. La Roche Quierry. Kerhoent of Brittany. Collins, a Fleming, his younger brother was one of the pages of Bonaparte. Péronin. Marsangy.

1792.

*Leaders.*

Saubnac. Vaillant. Bourgogne. Chamissot. Salvert, the Queen's page.

On account of the Revolution and the decrees about the nobility, the places of the pages who left at that time were not filled up. This ancient establishment was brought to an end by the fall of the throne, the King's captivity, and the danger that was run by all who had attached themselves to him, and the remainder were broken up.

I may note that the promotion of the pages, and the coming of the new ones, took place on the first of April in the great stable, while the other pages were relieved on the first of the year.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE GUARDS.

“Four or five centuries ago, a king of France created guards contrary to the habits of those times, to protect himself against the assassins that a petty Asiatic prince had sent to destroy him. In earlier times the kings had lived in peace amid these subjects, like fathers among their children.”—MONTESQUIEU, *Persian Letters*.

THOUGH Montesquieu makes these philosophical reflexions, it may be said that the institution of guards around kings is as old as the establishment of kings themselves. The government of the Patriarchs was the only one where these precautions would not be needful, being the heart of a great family. As soon as the increase of population extended the bounds of society, there was a perceptible relaxation of morals, and the kings, born protectors of the weak, dispensers of justice and favour, necessarily created enemies, and so were obliged to put themselves out of reach of the wickedness and malice of men, who are always unjust through their selfishness.

It is true that Philip Augustus, during his stay in the Holy Land, established sergeants-at-arms to be at his side, and to secure him from the daring

attempts of the Old Man of the Mountain; "And when the said King received information, he doubted in himself, and formed and took counsel to guard himself; he chose sergeants furnished with maces and well armed, who night and day should be around him, to guard his body." But long before, Gontran, King of Orleans, seeing that his two brothers had been killed, established a great guard around his person about the year 587. And if it were pertinent to my subject, I might easily refer to Homer's authority, that a soldier watched at the entrance of the tent of Achilles when Priam came to him as a suppliant. But I must not dwell here upon anything but the King's guard, as I saw and knew it for some years before the Revolution. Indeed, my account of it shall be as it was after the reductions of M. de Saint-Germain, which had the least effect in retarding the fall of the throne, or in precipitating it; for, as everybody knows, it was not caused by the want of defenders, but by hidden intrigues, and the excessive kindness of the King. Of what use, indeed, were these remnants of valorous troops? The steps of the throne were broken behind their imposing phalanx, the nobles of the empire overturned, and their heads flung on the scaffold. Secret cabals performed what the boldest shrunk from undertaking; they paralysed the warriors' arms, and blunted the edge of their weapons.

When I came to Court, the interior defence was composed of the body-guards alone, with a company of a hundred Swiss, and a company of guards

of the gate. I do not include the French and Swiss guards, as they might be considered a garrison, and their duty lay outside the palace.

The body-guards were about thirteen hundred. They were relieved every quarter, and during their three months they spent in turn one week at the castle, one at the hotel for hunting, and the third at liberty. Thus a body-guard, and a few hundred Swiss, were the whole of the palace-guard.

To be received into the body-guards, it was necessary to be of a good stature, and also to be of noble birth. But this latter condition was not quite so strictly required, for the nobles preferred the army to the body-guards, as these were only privates in laced coats. The greatest number of privates were furnished by the poorer nobles, especially from the southern provinces, but by no means the larger proportion of officers; for their posts were very much sought after as much for the rank as for the opportunities that they afforded of becoming known to the King by their frequent access to his person.

The corps was dressed in blue, with red breeches and stockings, all laced with silver. It was a splendid corps, with the rich uniform and handsome men and horses; and when the King reviewed them every four years in the plain of the Trou d'Enfer the sight was really incomparable, being enhanced by the presence of the Court and an immense crowd of spectators.

At the castle the duty of the body-guards was to stand sentry at the doors of the apartments, to turn out under arms when the Princes passed, to



line the chapel during mass, and escort the dinners of the Royal Family. They had to know dukes and peers, for when they passed the sentry had to carry arms, and stamp twice with the right heel. The sentry also had to open the gate and allow no one else to open it, but it is clear enough that the guard himself was very glad to be excused any of these duties.

The guards were divided between four halls in the castle; the principal guard-room was at the top of the marble staircase; the sentries on the Princes' apartments were posted thence; the second, which opened into the first, was the Queen's guard-room; the third the Dauphin's, and the fourth was on the ground-floor to the right of the marble court, near the little staircase, by which the King came in from hunting. Every night beds were prepared in these rooms, and screens had been placed round them, ever since the Queen of Louis XV., coming home very late one evening, had seen a body-guard lying not very decently in bed.

The body-guards ranked as sub-lieutenants and lieutenants, and the sergeants as captains. They were quartered in a large hotel in the Rue Royale, and the horses they rode on escort to the King were kept there; they were very swift of pace, and had short tails. Their troop-horses were at head-quarters.

One of the four companies that composed the body-guard was called Scotch from the country where it was first raised; it had held this post of honour from the time of Charles VII., who had engaged some men of that nation in his service.

They wore silver and white cross-belts, and their head-quarters were at Beauvais. The others bore the names of their captains, and were—the company of Villeroy with green cross-belts, head-quarters at Chalons-sur-Marne, Captains the Duke de Ville-roy and the Duke de Guiche; the company of Noailles, blue cross-belts, head-quarters at Troyes, Captain the Prince of Poix; and lastly the company of Luxembourg, yellow cross-belts, head-quarters Amiens, commanded by the Prince de Luxembourg. The Scotch company was commanded by the Duke d'Ayen.

The duties of captains of the guard were among the best at Court. During their quarter they answered for the safety of the King's person, and after the attempt of Damiens to assassinate Louis XV. the captain on duty had, as a matter of form, to apply to the parliament for letters of pardon. After this had taken place, a hedge of Swiss Guards fenced the King's carriage when he entered it. The moment the King left his rooms he was always followed by his Captain of the Guards, who was bound never to lose sight of him, or allow himself to be separated from him, except in a *défilé*, where custom required the equerry to go first, to give assistance in case of need.

The military rank of the captain of the guards depended on his rank in the army, and was not fixed. He was often only a colonel, like the Duke de Guiche, while the lieutenants were marshals of the camp, and the sub-lieutenants colonels or lieutenant-colonels.

Several of these officers accompanied the King when he went to mass, and a sub-lieutenant commanded the picquet that followed the King's carriage. Their uniform was embroidered in the same pattern as the lace of the guards; but the officers did not wear red stockings. They carried a little ebony stick with an ivory knob in their hands.

In the interest of truth I must say that the body-guard were always very insubordinate to their chiefs. Their valour was sometimes forgotten in their murmurs and quarrels about the honours due to them. At the beginning of the revolution, they were the first to give a specimen of mutiny by going tumultuously to demand the restoration of a sergeant discharged for having presented a seditious memorial against the duties required of the guards. And scarcely can their behaviour on the 6th of October wipe out this stain on the first of military virtues, obedience and submission to leaders. I was forced by special circumstances to serve in this corps at Coblenz. I observed its vices and faults without partiality, as I was a very short time in it; and I came to the conviction that, though one of the bravest troops of the army, it was at the same time the proudest and most undisciplined.

Eight guards of the Scotch company had the title of Guards of the Sleeve; and two were on duty every day, sticking to the King's sleeve in public. Their orders were never for an instant to lose sight of the King's person; and it might be said that nothing but the lid of the coffin could

come between, for they had to place him in it and lower the corpse at Saint Denis. They wore hoquetons over their uniform, a kind of tunic covered with gold and silver embroidery raised in bosses.

When Louis XI. renewed the treaties, signed by his father, Charles VII., with his good gossips the Swiss, he was desirous of keeping a hundred of them about his person. This was the beginning of the company of a hundred Swiss, and they always were some of the handsomest men of the regiment of Swiss Guards. Faithful to their manners and customs on days of ceremony, they still wore the antique dress of the liberators of Switzerland; the large slashed breeches, the doublet, starched ruff, and plumed cap. When this battalion of tall men marched heavily in the palace court, with their ponderous partisans, to the roll of their enormous drums, with the penetrating sound of a shrill fife, led by their ancient banner, which came down to the time of Henry II., they might be supposed to be the picked men of a canton on their way to victory for their country's liberty from the oppressor. Except on these days of ceremony, the hundred Swiss were dressed in a French coat of blue with gold lace, and the rest of their clothing was red; but they kept their halberds, and carried them on sentry at their various posts, and in their guard-room, which was before that of the body-guards.

This company was commanded by the brave Duke de Brissac, who was murdered at Versailles in the month of September, 1792, among the prisoners from Orleans.

The guards of the gate really guarded the chief gate of the court of the palace by day alone. They never opened it till the time appointed for the King's levee, generally half-past eleven. They had also to know who possessed the right of bringing their carriages into the court. This favour was known by the name of the Honours of the Louvre, and was confined to princes, marshals of France, and ambassadors. The other carriages waited in the adjoining yards. It does not appear whether it was in consequence of some negligence, or for some other reason, that the guards of the gate were always relieved at night by the body-guards.

M. de Vergennes was captain of this company, and they were dressed like the body-guards, except the lace, which was half gold and half silver.

There were also two weak companies of *gendarmes* and of light horse; one in red and black, the other in red and white, with gold lace. The first was commanded by the Prince de Soubise, the other by the Duke d'Aiguillon. These companies never mounted or went on duty, except on State occasions, but every evening a trooper was detailed to receive the countersign, which the King gave to the officers of all the corps at nine o'clock in the evening.

The Marquis de Sourches, grand-provost of the hotel, commanded a company of guards, who performed the police duties. In addition to these measures of precaution, the Swiss of the castle patrolled its many dark winding mazes; they were accompanied by spaniel dogs, trained to search all

the corners to see if anyone were concealed in them. The numerous passages, corridors, and staircases would have become a resort of thieves, but for these precautions.

Every Sunday the regiment of French guards in garrison at Paris, and that of Swiss guards in barracks at Rueil and Courbevoie, sent a strong detachment to Versailles. They took charge of the external defence, and when the King went out they paraded in the Ministers' court. Their barracks were under the buildings of this court, and in the great wooden huts in the shape of tents. The officers of these corps had the entry to the King, like persons who had been presented.

I may note that the abbreviation was officers *of* the guards for those of the body-guards, and officers *in* the guards for those of the French guards.

Monsieur and the Count d'Artois also, each of them, had two companies of body-guards and one of Swiss for their rooms. The guards of Monsieur were in red, those of the Count d'Artois in green. These guards never bore arms except in the apartments of their princes, and could not appear in the courts of the castle with their musquetoons, nor accompany the princes out of doors. No more could any of the guards except the King's appear in the State apartments without taking off their cross-belts. H-vew

Nothing less than the whole vigour of the old Marshal Biron could have maintained the exact discipline to which he had reduced the regiment of French guards. His successor, the Duke de



Châtelet, who was not without a certain spirit of order, left the regiment exposed to all the seductions that quarters like Paris could offer. And so this corps was the first to desert their King on the 14th of July. Those who were at Versailles held out a few days longer, but one morning they deserted their posts, and the regiment of Flanders was brought up to occupy them.

The body-guards were sent to their head-quarters after the 6th of October, and soon disbanded. The King wished to save them; besides, as soon as he delivered himself to the executioners, the guards became useless.

The hundred Swiss forgot the fidelity of their ancestors; they kissed the hands of their oppressors, and yielded their post of honour to the Paris guard. They were contemptuously allowed to exist till the suppression of the Monarchy, as not being dangerous.

As for their fellow-countrymen they remained at their post, firm and immovable like the rocks of their own mountains; nothing but the cannon of the 10th of August could drive them away, and not till they had, as is well known, watered the floor of the Tuileries with their blood.



## CHAPTER III.

## VERSAILLES.

“I visited the places that had been the scene of so much splendour, and saw nothing there but neglect and solitude.”—VOLNEY, *Les Ruines*.

CENTURIES and Revolutions produce decay in the works of man similar to that produced in Nature by the change of the seasons; every generation destroys or transforms the works of the preceding. What would Louis ~~XVII.~~ have said if, in less than fifty years after his death, he could have seen his little hunting-box—the miserable house at Versailles, as Bassompierre called it—transformed into an immense palace; the village become a considerable town; and every art assembled to beautify the spot, and give those magnificent fêtes that realised the prodigies of fairy-land, and bore witness to the taste and power of Louis XIV. And what would that great King himself have said to see abandoned and deserted the castle he had built at such expense, and where art had overcome nature; its masters torn from their asylum; grass growing in the streets; ivy making its way through stone and marble; some invalids occupying its alcove,

XIII.

and hiding the gilded decorations of the abode of kings, the best work of the great century, under their rags. The projects of man are inscribed on sand; their works have foundations of clay.

Louis XIII. bought the site of a mill on an elevation, and built a small house there for nothing but a hunting-box. It was sold to him by Jean de Soisy, in 1627, who was not the lord of the village, for it was a dependence of the Bishop of Paris, having been the property of Marshal de Loménie, Clerk of the Council of Charles IX., killed at the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew. Louis XIV., fond of the arts, and undeterred by difficulties, selected the spot to make it the abode of kings, neglecting the delightful position of Saint-Germain because the view of the towers of Saint-Denis, that could be seen from there, depressed his spirits. At least, that was one of the reasons attributed to the King for the selection of such a poor, marshy spot, where there would have been so much difficulty in providing all the beautiful waters without the help of the ingenious machine at Marly. Though there were so many obstacles, the palace was raised with inconceivable rapidity. The greatest part was finished in less than seven years, and it was inhabited in 1687. The chapel was not finished till 1710; it had been commenced in 1699. But Louis XIV. had by that time lost some of his energy and his taste for magnificence from old age and the harass of an unfortunate war.

The effects of the hasty construction of the palace were soon seen; it was far from offering a

stubborn resistance to the assaults of time, for less than a century after its erection, there were apprehensions that it would crumble away in many spots. The foundations had been laid upon made ground, and were not secure; the building was shored up in several places. I also saw the beam that supported the alcove in the King's room falling into dust; and if it had not been observed, the King might some night have found himself on the ground-floor, in the presence of the captain of his guard. A bed was put in the large dressing-room for him, and he slept there for six months.

The amount of the expenses incurred at Versailles was long made a pretext for the war declared against the ancient dynasty. Mirabeau asserts that Marshal de Belle-Isle stopped in a fright when he had reckoned up to twelve hundred millions. Volney, from a manuscript in the hands of the superintendent of works, makes the total fourteen hundred millions. But this book, now in the hands of Sieur Guillaumot, a manuscript nicely bound in morocco, with gilt edges, and with a scroll bearing the arms of Mansard, superintendent of works, fixes the cost at 153,282,827 livres, 10 sous, 3 deniers. There is also the account of the expense of the buildings for twenty-seven years of the reign of the great King, from 1664 to 1690; and it shows that the whole expense was only 306,565,650 livres for the building of the castle of Versailles, as well as that of the churches of Notre-Dame and Recollets, the house at Trianon, Clagny, Saint-Cyr,

Marly, and the water-works, Noisy, Moulineaux, the aqueduct of Maintenon, the lead for conduits, glass, furniture, statues, and the canal of Languedoc. Indeed, assistance given to country manufactures, and rewards to scientific men, are included in this sum.

I shall not attempt a minute description of the castle and the garden, but shall speak of the interior only, as it will require considerable alterations if the new dynasty takes up its quarters there. One of the principal faults to be found with the castle of Versailles is, that there is no entrance worthy of the edifice. A multitude of retiring angles on the side to the court at last reduce the front to seven windows, and the only object of this arrangement was the preservation of the little mansion of Louis XIII. The *façade* looking to the garden is much superior, as the breadth is six hundred yards; hardly anything more majestic can be seen.

The real entrance to the apartments was by the splendid marble staircase; but it is at the side, and reached by three narrow arcades, and only leads to the King's ante-chambers, and the way into the gallery is only by a door in the middle; so that the King's rooms are reached without enjoying the beauty of the grand rooms. The true place for the grand staircase at Versailles would have been in the situation of the little theatre in the right wing, with a communication with the chamber of Hercules. Thus an embassy, or solemn deputation, would arrive by the royal court,

mount this staircase, and pass through all these splendid halls before reaching the sovereign; unless they were received as Louis XIV. received the Persian Ambassador, at the end of the great gallery, where there was room for all the authorities of the State to take up a position. I will not enlarge on this notion; it might be extended farther.

There are few persons who do not know the castle of Versailles, as it has for several years formed an immense museum of pictures. The King was formerly approached by the marble staircase, through the guard-room, the ante-chamber, the *Œil de Bœuf* and, lastly, the waiting-room. But those who had not the right to remain in the King's apartments, passed at once into the gallery—one of the finest in Europe—where the pencil of Le Brun has portrayed the victories of Louis XIV., and an immense number of doors of looking-glass repeated in perspective the views of the windows overlooking the garden. In this gallery, all the strangers who came from the furthest parts of France to see their king once in their lives, took post, to await the moment when, on Sunday, the whole royal family issued from the King's apartments to go to mass, and crossed the eight halls on the way. All these halls were named from the subjects of the paintings on the ceiling. They were the halls of Diana, Mercury, Mars, &c.; and, as they were passages rather than rooms, only occupied permanently by the Swiss sentries, they had no other ornaments but the pictures, the lustres, and gilding.

Turning to the right, the first hall was that of Apollo ; there was a throne in it, under a canopy of crimson damask, but it was never used. The King very seldom gave audience seated on his throne, and never under that canopy. In this room, also, there was a glass thermometer fixed in the window, and the King came several times a day to ascertain the temperature ; and a servant of the castle noted it down in his book three times a day.

There was a clock in the hall of Mercury, formerly of much note, but less remarkable at present, from the rapid advance in mechanism. At every hour cocks crowed and flapped their wings, Louis XIV. issued from a temple, and Fame, in a cloud, came and crowned him to the sound of a chime.

The fine picture of the Queen by Madame Le Brun, I have mentioned above, was placed in the hall of Mars. One day I saw the Queen and her family under this picture ; she was dressed in the same colour, and we could see the exact likeness.

In the hall of Venus might be seen the antique statue commonly called Cincinnatus, now recognised as Jason resuming his sandal after passing the torrent Anauros. It is now in the Musée Napoléon.

The last of this long range of halls was that of Hercules, one of the finest and largest known. The vestibule of the chapel was entered thence, in which were the doors of the tribune, and the two staircases that led to the ground floor. Then came the chapel gallery, leading to the apartments in that wing of the castle occupied by the Princes of the blood and some great officers.



The castle of Versailles may be compared to an immense labyrinth, from the number of galleries, corridors, little staircases, and rooms that it contains. A person needed to be very well used to it to find his way about; and many small towns had not the population of the castle of Versailles; for, in addition to the members of the Court who lived there, must be reckoned the great community; a large square building, where the chief part of the King's officers lived, and where the tables were laid for these officers' meals, when it was customary to board them, a practice abolished for forty years.

The ground fell away sensibly to right and left of the castle. It was most perceptible on the side of the Orangery, by the two gigantic staircases that reached to the number of a hundred and four steps. The more airy situation and more extensive view enjoyed on this side were reasons for the preference of all the royal family for rooms there. Some Court lords were also lodged there. Though the apartments they occupied were dark and inconvenient, being under the roof, they always preferred them to their houses in the town, when they had to pass a few days at Court. Being required in the castle several times in the day, they had only to pass along the galleries, and were not obliged to order their carriages, leaving them as well as their cooking arrangements in their houses.

The apportionment of quarters was in the department of the grand-marshal of quarters, an office that went back to the earliest times of the Monarchy, when he was called *mansionarius*, and was the



Marquis de la Suze. He had quarter-masters under him, and they marked the quarters of the King and his attendants with white chalk, and of the Princes with yellow chalk, when with the army or on a journey. When apartments were vacant in the castle of Versailles, there was a whole series of intrigues and petitions for them, people vied with one another for them.

The four Ministers were lodged in the first court, but their offices were in houses in the Rue de la Surintendance. In the War Office there were relief plans of all the fortresses in France. The keeper was M. Berthier, the father of Prince Alexander of Neufchâtel. At the Foreign Office might be seen the portraits of all the Sovereigns of Europe, and of those of Asia, with whom France had correspondence.

I will say nothing of the gardens of Versailles, as they are still in existence, and very little altered. Still a few statues have been removed, especially the fine bust of Jupiter, attributed to Myro, a celebrated Greek sculptor, given to Louis XIV., by the town of Besançon, after the conquest of Franche Comté. It was to be seen in a thicket on the right of the rock, and is now in the Paris Museum.

As no carriages, except those of the Princes, entered into the royal court, and as confusion would have arisen from numbers, sedan-chairs were much in use at Versailles. They waited for hire in all the squares, and each of the great lords had his own with porters in livery.

The town of Versailles was increasing daily. It was quite recently built, and full of fine houses, but

had no trade. It was nothing but the Court and the crowd it attracted that supported this immense population. And who could believe that the fire of the Revolution never blazed with such fury as in this population, whose only subsistence was through the favours of the Court, or the places they held there. The hour of the King's departure struck that of the ruin of the town; and misery at once began to reign. What a contrast for any one who has formerly seen the splendour and wealth of this city, to see the grass now growing in the streets and squares! What swarms there are of mendicants! Old, ungrateful servants of the best of masters, surround and persecute the visitor to convoy him and show him the remains of all the magnificence, and obtain from him some assistance in their destitution. Everything is crumbling away. The broken gates are an evidence of crime; the remnants of splendour that are to be seen are a painful reminder of the magnificence of this place. The masters of these vast domains are missing, and there is terror in the thought that they vanished like a flash of lightning, leaving no trace but a sorrowful remembrance, and a solemn lesson; so that, in the words of the author of "*Les Ruines*," "Here once flourished a wealthy city; this was the seat of an honoured empire. Yes, these now desert spots were once animated by a lively multitude. These streets, now so solitary, were crowded by busy multitudes; these silent walls once rang ceaselessly with the noise of work and shouts of joy and feasting.

"These are the workings of Heaven's justice. A

mysterious God is executing his incomprehensible judgments. Doubtless a hidden anathema was decreed against this land; the generations of the day are smitten, in vengeance upon the generations of the past. Who shall fathom the depths of Deity.”  
—Volney “*Les Ruines*.”

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE PRIVATE APARTMENTS.

A SET of rooms where the Princes could retire from the public, and relieve themselves from the weight of grandeur in solitary comfort, were called the private apartments.

I propose to describe those of the King, and the rooms where he received his Court, and will do so with some detail. Most of the curiosities that were to be seen there are now lost; some have passed into foreign hands, others are the prey of some robber ruffians, who will be careful how they show them if still in their possession. We like to follow all the proceedings of Louis XIV; we seek to know him privately, to conjecture his thoughts, to see the weak side of the man, and to discover some political secrets. And if equally brilliant deeds were not performed in the reign of Louis XVI. his misfortunes will supply an interest, and fancy will delight to roam over his habitation, though he has nearly passed from memory.

In the preceding chapter I treated of the grand rooms and sumptuous public thoroughfares. The bed-room of Louis XIV. was entered from the

Ceil de Bœuf, but in the subsequent reigns it became the waiting-room. This great hall was the centre of the castle, and the end of the shabby little court called the marble court, with a great balcony over it. Above was placed the real *memento mori*; not, as in Persia, a slave to remind the sovereign of mortality, but a dial with the hand fixed at the hour of the death of the last monarch. Our imagination takes every direction; no doubt the Kings must, when alone, have often made conjectures as to where this solemn pointer would stand when they were gone. Louis XV. died on the 11th of May, 1774, at three o'clock in the afternoon. I have found, by writing to Versailles, that the hand is in the same position as it was when I went away. Its progress has ceased, but the stoppage has not caused the crime it should have noted to be forgotten. The hangings of this room, still called the chamber of Louis XIV., were of gold and purple brocade, and extremely magnificent. The bed was behind a high gilded balustrade. This bed called up a crowd of interesting and solemn memories, though it had been renewed. It was there that the great King had shown his courtiers how to die, after having shown them for more than half a century how to reign both in prosperity and in misfortune. There under those curtains had Madame de Maintenon sat, and round this funeral couch had the princes waited to gather great and deep lessons at that solemn moment. There were two fire-places in this large room, with a great deal of gilding, and porcelain lustres. Little towers were carved on all the wood-

work, the arms of the house of Bouillon, for it was one of the privileges of the post of Grand Chamberlain to be allowed to put his scutcheon on the doors of the King's chamber.

The second room was the Council-chamber, where the destinies of the kingdom were determined. By the side of the principal door opening into the gallery was a little room called the *wig-closet*, because, in the time of Louis XIV., when it was a mark of old age or asceticism to wear the natural hair, the King's wigs were kept there, for him to select the most becoming.

Just opposite was the real sleeping-room of the King, with blue furniture, and a bed ornamented with feathers, helmets, and gilding. The death-bed of Louis XV. was not such an imposing spectacle as that of Louis XIV. I saw still remaining the marks of the screws of the coffin on the balustrade where it had been rested to receive the remains of the King of France. An old chaplain, the Abbé de Beaumont, who had never left Louis XV. during the infectious illness that caused his death, and himself very nearly died from catching it, told me the history of the sad event on the spot, and showed me the marks, explaining what had made them.\*

This room was adorned with valuable articles that were often changed. But there were two magnificent golden candlesticks as a permanency placed on a cabinet, and made by Père Germain, the deli-

\* Sir Thomas Wrexall in his *Memoirs*, published in 1815, asserts that Louis XV. died in a little white bed placed between two windows on account of the heat. I never heard this report.

cacy of whose work cast the value of the material into obscurity. Between these two artistic marvels a simple plaster group had the especial privilege of attracting the looks of that kind father, Louis XVI.; his daughter, as an infant, praying for a dauphin. When accidentally broken, he had it remodelled. Above the doors the portraits of Don John of Austria, Catherine de Valois, Marie de' Medici, and of the gallant Francis I., by the pencils of great masters.

The King could visit the Queen through a concealed door in this room, through passages contrived between the floors. A few days after the 5th of October I went to see the havoc of that day, and found that the doors were left open in the confusion. I explored this labyrinth of unknown passages, several of which were padded; I also made my way into a number of little rooms connected with the Queen's, never having suspected their existence. Most of them were dark, only looking out into little courts. They were plainly furnished, almost all with panelling and looking-glasses. The only thing to notice that I saw there was a pretty picture, by Madame Le Brun, of the Dauphin and his sister giving a bunch of grapes to a goat.

The servants of the body and wardrobe on duty at the castle waited during the day in the King's rooms above mentioned; but the fourth room, called the great dressing-room, was where the head body-servant was posted. In the middle of the room there was a small model of the statue of the Place Louis XV. and the famous clock of Passe-



mant, seven feet high, which, besides showing the time, displayed the years, months, &c., as well as the phases of the moon and revolutions of the planets. The King always sat up till after midnight on New Year's Eve, to see his clock make all its changes. In the same room were the portraits of Louis XV. and Queen Maria Leszczinska, as well as those of the King's father and mother.

I will not enumerate all the pictures representing the battles and sieges of the reign of Louis XV. and the American War, that were also hung in these rooms. Though not of large size, they were so carefully painted that the uniforms could easily be recognised. The battle of Fontenoy, the taking of Bergen-op-Zoom in the night, and the siege of New York were especially attractive, by their minute work and effects of light and beautiful landscape.

Once for all I note a quantity of porcelain statues, twenty inches high, exact copies of the statues of warriors and great men of the time of Louis XIV., made by order of the government; particularising a statue of Frederick II. on horseback, equally notable for its exact likeness and refined execution; it was between two splendid pots of stocks made of valuable china, one of which was broken by an unlucky visitor, for the public were admitted to these apartments during the King's absence. The poor man was short-sighted, and not seeing the glass shade over the vase broke it with his forehead, and the splinters broke the flower into fragments. I mention this little event, for

the poor man, fancying in his fright that he saw the drawbridge of some fortress lowered for him, became faint, and gave his name and address very sorrowfully. But Louis XVI., whom persons have chosen to represent as a violent and choleric man, sent to console and relieve him, though the damage cost more than a million crowns.

To the left of the cabinet was the waiting-room of the castle servants, who wore livery and waited on the King in private, performing the duties of our footmen.

Continuing the tour of apartments on the side to the castle courts, the series of rooms are reached where the King spent his life and laboured without ceasing. A quantity of most rare articles were accumulated there, and an immense number of curiosities. I have seen the picture of Hyder Ali and all his family, the walking cane of Louis the Great, a clock that showed the time at Paris and at all the capitals in the world at once. The fourth room was the King's private library, where he usually worked at a little bureau placed in the embrasure of the window. The monarch's amusement during his work was to look at the people crossing the courts; and visitors, at least the honest ones, might convince themselves by the sight of the books in use lying on the floor, and the number of papers strewed all around, that Louis XVI. did not spend his time in smiths' work, in getting drunk, or beating his servants, as his slanderous enemies desired to establish. In the middle of the library stood a large table of maho-

gany, of one single piece, supporting statues of La Fontaine, Boileau, Racine, La Bruyère, &c., seeming to meditate in silence over their immortal writings, or to be in Ninon's apartments listening to the greatest work of Molière.

Lastly, this suite of apartments was completed by three rooms, a drawing-room, a billiard-room, and a dining-room. It was there that the King entertained some of his company at supper on days when he had been hunting. At nine o'clock, before the countersign was given out, an usher used to open the door of the *Œil de Bœuf*, and announce the names of the invited guests, who proudly entered the room, while the rejected went home to hide their disgust and eat their meal in solitude and sorrow.

There was nothing particular in these rooms to notice but two little hunting scenes, where the King, his attendants, and the landscape were exactly represented. Every year about Christmas time these three rooms were lent to the Sèvres porcelain manufactory, and the works exhibited for a fortnight in them. Everybody made haste to go and see and make purchases. The Court gave a good deal away in presents, and the King was amused to watch the unpacking, and the crowd of purchasers.

The King went out by a stair near the waiting-room of the servants of the castle when on his way to hunt. There was a guard-room at the bottom, and it was at the entrance of this room that Louis XV. was struck by Damiens, who had been hidden

in a little passage leading to the Court of Stags. The violence of the assassins of our day was more directed against the crown than the person of Louis XVI., as that would have been easily reached. Every evening, returning from supper with Madame, he would cross the courts or large dark galleries in the winter wrapped in a grey cloak, with an umbrella if it rained, and only accompanied by two servants bearing torches.

The same stair was the way to the room of the captain of the guard on the ground floor, by the court of marble, required by fashion to be as close as possible to the King's rooms. At the top of this stair, as I have mentioned above, were the apartments occupied by the Duke de Villequier in my time, and before him by Madame Dubarry.

Across the waiting-room of the castle servants was the entrance to the King's private dining-room, looking upon the little Court of the Stags. There was a splendid barometer, by Torelli, a secretaire that played a tune on the organ every time a drawer was opened, and on tables with glass over them the King's service of gold plate, as valuable for the workmanship as for the material. I always admired an enamelled hen of gold, nearly as large as life, sitting in a little basket to hold fresh eggs.

From this room was the way to the little chambers all round every story of the Court of Stags, where the King had a whole set of geographical maps, relief plans, models of ships, a little observatory, and the famous forge that public report

would have it that Louis XVI. was continually using. I can assert that it looked very much neglected; and after midday the King was dressed in a manner that precluded such violent exercise, however useful it might have been to his health. At any rate his supposed talent was not always useless; for a fire broke out in a small set of apartments near the King's, and the door could not be beaten down; when the King came to the rescue with his tools and picked the lock soon enough for the fire to be extinguished, but not to save the life of the person in charge, an old woman who had gone to sleep by the hearth.

All these quantities of rooms were well lighted, but badly warmed, for the King disliked heat so much that I never saw his linen warmed in the most severe frosts. In summer, cloths were spread over the grand balcony of the levee-room, and watered with syringes; and the King often would push some one against them in joke to get a wetting, especially anyone that seemed to care much for the enormous elegance of the frisure then in vogue.

The King's favourite walk was on the roof of the castle, because he could go there alone and without fear of interruption. This walk could not have been very pleasant, as the space was so much interrupted by chimneys, pipes, roofs, and a number of little stairs made for a road from one side to the other; but the fine air, the beautiful view, and the entertainment of seeing all arrivals at Versailles with a telescope, compensated for these

little inconveniences. The King used chiefly to enjoy himself thus in the morning, after breakfast, and he liked it the better that it was within such easy reach. As he was watching the slaters at work there, one day, he went up a ladder that broke, and he might have had a very dangerous fall, but that one of the workmen caught him.

After the Court had left Versailles, I went over all the roofs commanding the town, the park, and neighbourhood; we also went there one day with the King, to see the burning of the storehouse of the Menus Plaisirs at Paris, where all the scenes of the Opera and its ornaments were burnt, and we could observe the lofty pyramid of various-coloured flame that arose from this collection of painted canvas and quantity of varnished planks.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE KING'S LEVÉE.

"The crowd at the levée is composed of hundreds of unknown persons, hoping to be seen by the Prince, though he cannot look at a thousand at once; and if he only looks at the same people to-day that he looked at yesterday, and will look at to-morrow, how many unlucky there are."—LA BRUYÈRE, "*Characters*."

THE ceremonial of the King's levée may seem the more curious to us because it is long gone by, and many persons will be likely to ask if this levée was really the moment when the King quitted the bed.\*

Probably in days gone by, courtiers were more active than at present, and were in attendance at the princes' waking. Haman was before daylight at the gate of Ahasuerus. But, by degrees the hour receded, and the levée became the King's toilette; for, with Louis XVI., though he left his bed at seven or eight in the morning, the levée was at half-past eleven, unless it was appointed at an earlier hour for hunting, or for State occasions.

The crowd of courtiers of Versailles, or of Paris,

\* The *lever* of Louis XIV. was really the King's rising from his bed at about eight o'clock in the morning.—Anquetil.



attended at the castle at the time of the levée. Some came to be noticed, others to get a glance from the Prince; others afterwards made their way to the Ministers in their offices, to make requests, often asking for promotion, and being received with refusals or disdain, for subordinates universally fancy that they obtain consideration by superciliousness, and generally substitute conceit for talent.

Everyone waited for the exact time of the levée in the antichamber, or in the gallery; and all on duty, or who had what was called the entrées of the room, were admitted into the *Œil de Bœuf*, a great hall that I have mentioned as just before the King's chamber, so called from an oval window placed in the arch of the roof. This was the actual temple of ambition, of intrigues, and falsehood. Sometimes a dazzled provincial, ignorant or distracted, attracted by the enormous fire on the hearth, or desirous of a nearer view of the numbers of ribbons, blue, red, or green, standing round the fire, would walk in, though the Swiss repeated his directions, and cries of "Pass on, Sir, into the gallery." Then was exhibited a miracle—French politeness taking possession of a Helvetian soul; the good Swiss made an excuse, and, pretending to make up the fire, or draw a curtain, he manœuvred about, and at last whispered in the offender's ear to tell him of his transgression, and spare the disgrace of a public ejection. The honest provincial blushed, and very often expressed his thanks, while the fop, who was no less an intruder into this grand company, for all his fine clothes, held up his head and went out as if it was his own choice.

This big Swiss was planted behind an immense stove that stood at the end of the *Œil de Bœuf*; he ate his meals there, and digested them full in the face of princes and dukes. At night, he arranged his little bed in the grand gallery, and might say he was the man who had the most magnificent lodgings in France. He slept surrounded with looking-glass, and at daybreak he might contemplate the splendid work of Le Brun with half-shut eyes, that would have preferred to see his country wine, and the gifts he received on New Year's Day. That day he was doubly alert in opening the door, and holding the curtain for the great lords, who gave a few louis for these attentions. At the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI., one of these porters was called Buchs; his humour, boldness, and wit were still held in remembrance.

Although the hall of the *Œil de Bœuf* was very large, there were days when it could hardly contain the crowd of courtiers. Some benches, and three or four pictures by Paul Veronese, were all the furniture.

At last all were in attendance; half-past eleven struck. A few minutes later, the King came out of his private apartments in morning dress, and entered the room of ceremony. A servant appeared at the door, and cried, "Wardrobe! Gentlemen!" Then entered the princes of the blood, the great officers of the crown, and the gentlemen who had the privilege of the great *entrées*, among them any of the King's tutors in youth.

The toilette began, the King put on his shirt and stockings. Then, at the order of the first gentleman of the chamber, the door was again opened, and the same voice cried, "The first *entrée*." On this summons appeared the doctors and the servants of the wardrobe not on duty.

When the King had nothing but his coat to put on, they called "The chamber." Then all the officers of the chamber entered, the pages, their tutor, the equerries, the chaplains, and all the courtiers admitted to the *entrée* of the chamber; that is to say, the Œil de Bœuf.

When the King was entirely dressed, the folding doors were flung open, and all the rest of the officers admitted, with the strangers, visitors properly dressed, and, by custom, the humble author, shyly coming to offer a dedication. Then the King entered the railing around the bed, and kneeling on a cushion, said a short prayer, with the clergy and chaplains around him; after which he received any petitions, and entered into the council-chamber, followed by those who had the right of entry. All other persons went into the gallery to await the hour of the King's going out on his way to mass.

Louis XVI. never had his hair dressed till he was entirely clothed. It was a curious custom, and, I think, must have been derived from the time when the enormous wigs I have mentioned were worn. After his levée he went into a dressing-room, where his embroidered clothes were covered with a great gown, and the barber servant, who had prepared the hair on rising, finished the dressing, and added the powder.

Having been spectators of the King's levée, let us see what happened at his retiring. It was really his going to bed; but business, or a little nap, would often make the King late.

At eleven o'clock came the officers on duty and the courtiers. Everything was ready; a splendid toilette table with lace and gold brocade, the dressing gown of white embroidered Lyons silk on a chair of red morocco, the chemise wrapped in a piece of taffety; on the railing a double cushion of the cloth of gold, called Sultan, with the nightcap and handkerchiefs on it. By it were the slippers of the same material as the gown placed near pages of the chamber, standing against the railing.

The Monarch arrived, the first gentleman of the chamber received his hat and sword, and handed them to an under-official. The King commenced a conversation with the courtiers, that was longer or shorter according as he found it pleasant, and was often much too long for our sleepiness and weary legs. After the conversation was finished the King went within the railing, knelt with the chaplain-in-waiting alone, who held a long taper-stand of silver gilt, with two tapers, while the Princes could only have one. The chaplain recited the prayer *Quæsumus omnipotens Deus*; and when the prayer was finished, the taper-stand was handed to the first servant of the chamber, and he, at the King's orders, gave it to any gentleman to be distinguished. This honour was so much appreciated in France, that many aspirants could not disguise their disgust if they did not obtain it. Marshal de Broglie, the

conqueror of Bergen, a blue ribbon and Marshal of France, covered with glory at forty years old, seemed to feel the deprivation more than anyone. His blushes and embarrassment proclaimed his cruel disappointment, so incomprehensible is the heart of man, containing petty infirmities along with the grandest qualities.

This taper-stand reminds me of a ludicrous incident that I witnessed. The Marquis de Conflans, much beloved by the King, was at supper with the Duchess de Polignac, the nucleus of a party at Court. The Abbé de Montazet, chaplain on duty, was there, as well as the Marquis de Belsunce. The talk brought on a wager, which of these two courtiers, being equally favoured, would have the taper-stand at the King's retiring. M. de Conflans, who often received that honour, maintained that M. de Belsunce would have it rather than himself. They attended the retiring. The Abbé de Montazet becoming interested in the wager, and being also witty and merry contrived the success of his side, namely of M. de Belsunce. After the prayer, the King did really send the taper-stand to M. de Conflans, who was surprised to find himself sought out in a corner where he tried to hide. The rogue of an Abbé, instead of reciting the prayer, had told the King in a low voice what had passed at Madame de Polignac's.

This Marquis de Conflans, son of the Marshal d'Armentières, was one of the handsomest men in France, and the best officer of light troops in the army. An excessive moisture of the head prevented

his wearing powder, or using the wonderful fashion of hair-dressing common in our time. But this simple attire of M. de Conflans required much time and care, as he was very particular about it. He was much respected by the King, in favour with the Queen, and died suddenly at an early age, just as he was washing his hands before sitting down to table.

To return to the retiring of the King. After the prayer the King took off his coat, the right sleeve being held by the grand-master of the wardrobe, the Duke de Liancourt, and the left by a master of the first rank, M. de Boisgelin or de Chauvelin, and always in descending order, if the higher officers were not present. Then the King took his shirt; it was given him by the first gentleman of the chamber. But if one of the Princes of the blood was present, it was he who had the right to put on the nightshirt, which was considered a great honour. Then the first gentleman of the chamber presented the dressing-gown to the King, whilst he took his purse, an immense bunch of keys, his telescope, and knife from his pockets; then let his small clothes fall down upon his heels, and standing thus would often again converse for a long time. At last he sat down in an arm-chair; a servant of the chamber on the right, one of the wardrobe on the left, knelt down, and each took one of the King's feet to pull off his stockings; then the two pages of the chamber advanced and put on his slippers. That was the time for departure; the usher gave the signal, saying, "Pass, gentlemen." No one remained but the Princes, the special service, and those who had the



little *entrée*. They talked to the King while his hair was being prepared for the night. That was the time for pleasant speeches and little anecdotes ; and the free noisy laugh of Louis XVI. often struck on our ears in the *Œil de Bœuf*, where we awaited orders for the next day.

Before Louis XVI. was absorbed by his troubles, bed-time was his time of relaxation and fun. He played tricks on the pages, teased Captain Laroche, and made them tickle an old officer, who was so sensitive that he used to run away for fear of it.

When the King came home from hunting, there was a ceremony for taking off his boots. It was the change of dress that the King made on such occasions, and the customs were much the same as at the *levée*. The King's wardrobe was in a little room looking on a small court behind the marble staircase. The King's coats, garments, and linen were kept there. Every day what was wanted for morning and evening toilette was brought up in great velvet wrappers.

After his rising, the King often received deputations of Parliament or of provincial estates. It was on one of those occasions that I saw him himself give a copy of Mirabeau's work on the Court of Berlin to the Advocate-General Séguier, to give more solemn effect to the decree that ordered it to be burnt by the hands of the executioner. And then Prince Henry of Prussia, who was much maligned in the book, said to M. Séguier, "You have some mud in your hand."

"Yes, your Highness," replied the witty magistrate ; "but it does not stain."



## CHAPTER VI.

## ETIQUETTE AND VARIOUS CUSTOMS.

IT was quite a study for any one who arrived at the Court, and had not been brought up there, to become perfect in the laws of etiquette, that kind of ægis which protects sovereigns from familiarity and contempt. Though these usages of ancient origin were daily dying out, they were still numerous. And though only the oldest of the Court, such as the Duke de Penthièvre, the Prince de Soubise, and Marshal Biron, still bowed to the King's state-bed, when he was not present, the most modernized of the courtiers always retreated to the wall when the King came towards them, and when quite forced against it they kept on shuffling their feet in hopes of being fortunate enough to get a word from the Sovereign. A person must be on very intimate terms with the King to be able to address a word to him, and that was only done in the third person. "Has the King had good sport to-day?" "Has the King caught cold?" The late Marshal Duras was one of those I have seen most familiar with the King; indeed he was more so than those who had been brought up along with him.

I must not be expected to give a complete guide-book, showing the duty of every officer; it would be an immense and wearisome work. I will only recall some of the customs that struck me most. There is one whose origin is completely unknown to me; a little packet of a change of linen, tied to a little sword two feet long, was brought every night and put under the King's bolster. Certainly it was a long way to the rooms where the King's clothes were kept; but why should not a certain quantity of linen have been kept in reserve in a box, just as the barber-servant kept a number of caps of various kinds, &c., in a crimson velvet trunk. Besides why that sword so short?—it could not be of any use.

It is easier to understand why a loaf, two bottles of wine, and one of iced water were brought into the King's bedroom. The officers were at a great distance, and this refecton, called the *en cas*, was kept in readiness in case the King should want anything. We read that when Louis XIV. heard that his servants would not take their meals with Molière, because he was an actor, he caused his *en cas* consisting of a chicken to be brought one day at the levée, and helped the celebrated comedian to a share of it. The Emperor Bonaparte kept up the custom, for his servant, Constant, tells a story in his memoirs of the difficulty he was in once when Napoleon was hungry at night and asked for his *en cas*, and it was needful to conceal the gluttony of his Mameluke Nistau who had eaten half of the fowl that the Emperor usually never touched.

Neither did Louis XVI. ever touch anything. If he wanted to eat between his meals, the servants of the castle always had syrups, sweetmeats, and other food in readiness. All liquor and food intended for the King was always assayed, that is to say, tasted by an officer of the goblet. If liquid, he drank a little; if it was meat, he dipped a little slice of bread in the sauce, or slightly rubbed it over the piece served up, in order to protect the sovereign from poison. But a king fated so to perish, would never have been saved by all these precautions.

The arm-chair, and some stools for the servants on duty, were within the enclosure formed by the railing around the King's bed; for no one sat down in the King's room, still less did they walk about. And when fashion had introduced the enormous wigs, in the time of Louis XIV., it was quite the thing to take them off and comb them in the King's waiting-room, but never in the bed-chamber, which was considered as the residence of the sovereign. Again, no one ever opened the door when coming in or going out, but asked the usher to open it; and instead of knocking at it, scratched gently. It was most polite to go out first, as the last had the longest view of the King, and all went out backwards.

I should never have done if I related all the little things necessary to be known, not so much as requisites of a perfect courtier, but merely for the avoidance of awkward mistakes. No doubt other usages were in existence in the older days of the monarchy,

that would give us great amusement if the trouble had been taken to preserve the remembrance of them to our day. Perhaps those we observe now, will some time afford amusement to our descendants.

And then, in France, they made the mistake of keeping any military garb away from the Court. No uniform but those of the Guards was ever seen there, except on the day of the review of the French Guard in the plain of Sablons, or when a colonel, who was about to rejoin his regiment, took leave, when he appeared in his regimentals.

Once on a time, our hardier ancestors thought it enough to have one great fire to ensure the family against the cold of winter. On Christmas night no one was left to do the evening's work, and the fire was allowed to take care of itself for several hours; a great trunk was put on it—the Yule log—so that all the family, coming shivering home from church, might find an enormous blaze, and be warmed to salute the joyful dawn. This ancient custom was still kept up at Court. On Christmas Eve, every hearth was fed with a great log, well painted, ornamented with devices and fleurs-de-lis, in memory of ancient custom.

Pardon to criminals is one of the fairest attributes of the sovereign; and custom willed it should not be refused to such as the King should meet by the way. I saw a specimen one day. Returning from the chase, on the road to Saint-Cyr, Louis XVI. met a poor deserter being taken back to his regiment for punishment. Whether the soldier knew his good fortune in this chance

or not, he threw himself on his knees, stretched out his arms to the King, and implored the royal pardon. The monarch immediately sent the officer of the guards with orders to have a proper pardon prepared, and his cheerfulness during the rest of the day showed the satisfaction his heart had felt at the exercise of this touching prerogative of royalty. But as abuses might have arisen, care was taken that the chain of galley-slaves on their way to the prison at Brest should make a circuit round Versailles. It was believed in France that the King could not see unhappiness without compassion in his heart. It is quite true; but there was reason to fear that his clemency might have become dangerous to society, and so opportunities were averted.

The bishop of the diocese alone had the right to appear at Court in a violet cassock; the rector and confessor in black. The prelates and churchmen on duty in the chapel on grand feast-days, and when the King heard mass in the body of the chapel, had their cassocks covered with a rochet; at other times they wore black coats, with a short cloak. The episcopal cross was the mark of bishops, like the red hat and stockings for cardinals.

The King never mounted his throne except for beds of justice and other judicial assemblies; and the kingly ornaments were worn on no occasion but his consecration. On other occasions, he had a purple coat and cloak, trimmed with wide embroidery, and a plumed hat on his head.

Every country-house that the King made little journeys to required a peculiar dress. Trianon had a red one embroidered in gold, Compiègne green, Choisy blue; the sporting dress was of dark-blue, and the pattern of the lace showed the kind of animal to be hunted. The plain green dress was for shooting, and all the company were dressed like the King.

This is enough to say on a subject that might become wearisome at too great length; and my last remark shall be that ladies have always been much more particular than men in points of etiquette, perhaps because their life does not seem sufficiently exciting without all these usages, many very strange, though it is already full of small details, or because they instinctively love these marks of respect. The Queen of Louis XIV. was one of the persons who contributed most to their establishment in France, as she showed great jealousy for the honour due to her. The haughty Princess had been brought up in Spain, and would never recede a morsel from the strict Spanish etiquette.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CHAPEL.

ALL the powers of art had combined and had laid the most costly materials under contribution to prepare a temple in the Castle of Versailles worthy of the royal abode it belonged to, if not, as it never could be, of the Divinity inhabiting it. Noble works of painters beamed around, brilliant gilding and precious marble.

The King went to mass every day; the rest of the family followed his example, and if this were only in consequence of the laws of etiquette, it was at least a good effect of them. We can only judge of acts, and not of feelings; besides, the enlightened piety of Louis XVI. could leave no doubt that he went to chapel much more from the dictates of his own good heart than of ceremonial observance.

At noon, or earlier, if the levée was earlier, the King left his rooms by a glass door leading from the council-chamber, passed through the great rooms and entered the tribune, preceded by pages, equerries, and officers of the guards, and followed by the captain of the guard.

Every Sunday the Royal Family went in a body



to mass. The princes went to the King's apartments, and the company started when the Queen herself quitted the apartments by the Hall of Peace at the bottom of the gallery. This multitude of officers and ladies magnificently dressed, advancing amid a crowd of spectators down this long chamber, one of the finest examples of its kind in Europe, formed a most imposing spectacle.

The chapel of Versailles was in a kind of way on two floors. The tribune was on the upper story, and a gallery on each side for the accommodation of the persons on duty who could not find room in the tribune, as well as strangers. The tribune was very large; in front it was fenced with a marble balustrade with a great hanging of crimson velvet fringed with gold thrown over it, and at each end was a gilded lantern enclosed with glass, which would hold one person, and was intended for the princesses if they were ill or desired not to appear in public. It may be noted that Madame de Maintenon always occupied one of them under Louis XIV.; it was the only indication of her bond of union with the King that she allowed to be seen in public. As the tribune would have been very cold in winter when the Court was present at very lengthy services, especially on Christmas Eve, when Divine Service lasted from ten at night to one in the morning, a great gilded framework of wood was erected over the tribune, making it a handsome saloon, with windows to open at pleasure.

It was only on great feast-days that the Court went down to the ground-floor of the chapel by

two winding stairs at each side of the tribune. A splendid carpet was laid on the floor; a desk and two arm-chairs were set for the King and Queen. The princes had chairs and a footstool; all the officers and ladies placed themselves in the rear on stools and benches; lastly, the chaplains and guards of the sleeve were on each side of the desk.

On these days there was one bit of statute labour which was much sought after—the collection of alms. A young lady after her presentation was obliged to perform this duty, which was somewhat dreaded before the time came; though there was sure to be ample compensation in the murmur of praise and admiration that arose at the appearance of a young lady in the bloom of youth and beauty, splendidly dressed, and covered with all the diamonds in her family. I have said that they saw the day arrive with some apprehension. Indeed it was embarrassing for a girl who had only just left her mother to find herself obliged to pass before the eyes of all the Court in force, slowly making a multitude of curtseys that she had rehearsed the night before with a person who had to teach her. And she had not the resource of a cavalier to conduct her, and, if necessary, support her tottering steps, as was done in the churches. There was her shyness, and the fear of missing a courtesy, or going to the princes in wrong order, added to the embarrassment of a Court-dress, with enormous *panier* and long train. I have seen several of these young collectors in a pitiable condition; but coquetry and ambition soon made them

forget the passing annoyance and fatigue of this imposing ceremony.

The collection produced a great sum ; for though it was only the princes, the great officers, and the ladies that gave, it came to a large amount, as nothing but gold was received, and was a strain on people who were not rich. Anyone who could provide himself with a half-Louis was lucky, unless he did like one blue ribbon who always gave a counter. I have really been assured that for several years, on the ceremonial days of the order of the Saint Esprit, a counter was always found in the collection. If the order had not been destroyed, the name of this modern Harpagon must have been discovered at his death, unless he found means of perpetuating his secret by some disposition in his will. These collections, amounting to more than a hundred Louis on days of procession, were given to the curés of Versailles.

On the great festival days that fell on Sunday the consecrated bread\* was offered to the King and royal family. It was a very large piece of roll. Louis XVI. used to take his knife out of his pocket cut off a piece, and give the rest to the pages of the chamber. Indeed he very often did not take so much trouble, but bit a piece off the roll. On the day I was entered among the pages I had the piece that bore the marks of the King's teeth, and in my provincial ecstasy ate it reverentially.

The King's band performed masses and motets

\* Bread handed round after mass. A remnant of the Agapé, or love-feast.

composed by the best authors. At the Christmas midnight mass there was the great pleasure of hearing the famous Bezozzi performing little airs on the hautbois, that sounded the more graceful in the quiet night. The King's band had twelve children attached to it, called band pages, who served as falsettos. They were sons of servants of officers of the court, and wore the livery of the great stable; with the difference that they could not wear silk stockings or silver buckles.

When the King was on the ground-floor of the chapel the corporal was offered to him to kiss; this was one of the royal prerogatives, the King being considered as a sub-deacon. Bishops took the oath of allegiance after the Gospel, at a mass said at the altar of Saint Theresa, where there was a picture of the saint in an ecstasy, from the pencil of Santerre, so beautiful and voluptuous that many priests were afraid to say mass in that chapel.

The grand-almoner of France was the Cardinal of Montmorency Laval,\* Bishop of Metz, a proud and haughty prelate, whose name rather than his learning had raised him to the highest dignities of the State. He had succeeded Cardinal de Rohan, Bishop of Strasburg, in this office, after the unfortunate affair of the necklace, when the Queen's name had been used by rogues as a means of deceiving a great noble. In the eyes of justice the Prince de Rohan was not guilty, and the verdict

\* Louis Joseph de Montmorency Laval, Bishop of Metz, grand-almoner from 1786, was not made cardinal till 1789.

of the Parliament of Paris followed, because the parliament was not the judge of social morality ; but in the eyes of the King's Majesty the Cardinal was to blame for having supposed his sovereign capable of entering into clandestine dealings containing stipulations equally dishonourable to himself and to her. So the loss of his offices, and his banishment from court, was not an act of injustice, as the Queen's enemies wished to establish. The Cardinal felt this so clearly that he did not choose to appear at the States-general without the permission of the Court ; and in later times his conduct on his German property, and sacrifices for the cause of Louis XVI. are good proofs that this prelate was far from bearing malice against the King for the punishment of his follies.

In the eyes of the law Madame de Lamotte was guilty of conspiracy, seduction, and a considerable theft. Her assumed name of Valois\* was no reason for the remission of the penalties of felony she had incurred. Her conduct did not improve. I afterwards lodged in the same house as her husband, who had married again, and I thought him quite fit to have had such a guilty wife.

The Cardinal de Rohan, who was called Prince Louis, was very well preserved when I saw him at the States-general, though he had become afflicted with many diseases in his exile at the Abbey of Chaise-Dieu, and a complaint in the eye which obliged him to cover it with a piece of black silk. In

\* Madame de Lamo, or Lamotte, was really a direct descendant of the Baron de Remi, a natural son of Henry II.

the time of his grandeur he was the noblest and most magnificent lord at court. No one could make more use of his wealth and ancient honourable birth.

The Cardinal was badly served by some of his friends in the miserable business I have spoken of. It is really a fact that their foolish spite led them to issue Louis-d'or from the Mint at Strasbourg in 1788, in which the King's head had a little protuberance on the forehead, as if to liken him to duped husbands. The police made haste to destroy this scandalous coin, but several pieces escaped and are to be found in collectors' cabinets. I saw one myself, in 1794, in the hands of a merchant of Valenciennes, a great collector of medals, whom I met at Antwerp.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE MAUNDY.

THIS ceremony hallowed by ancient custom and the Divine example, offered a very touching spectacle by the contrast of power and humility in the master serving his subjects. Plenty of matter for deep and affecting reflections might be found in the simple graces of childhood approaching the majesty of the throne, and the mysterious ceremonies of religion directing the solemnity.

Twelve little children were ranged in the great hall of the body-guard on Maundy Thursday, as fresh as the enormous bouquets of choice flowers they bore. These children were selected with much care among those of the townsmen of Versailles, and the doctors attended to their health and cleanliness some time before the ceremony. They were dressed in little frocks of russet material, and three ells of fine cloth round their necks. A moveable pulpit was placed in the centre of the hall.

The service began with a sermon at nine o'clock. On that day the preacher might give the rein to his vehemence, and thunder with all his power against



the abuses and scandals of the Court. It was on one of those days that the Bishop of Senes fulminated his sinister prophecy and pronounced the condemnation of Louis XV., crying out with Jonah, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." And it is a fact that the prediction was realised by the monarch's death. After the sermon a bishop gave the absolution, and the ceremony began.

Each child held its right foot over a basin of silver gilt held by a chaplain; the Count d'Artois poured a little water over it, Monsieur wiped it with the napkin round the child's neck, and the King kissed the foot. Then the grand-almoner gave the child a little purse with twelve crowns in it; the child that had the unfortunate distinction of representing Judas had thirteen.

After washing the feet came the supper. All the dishes were laid out in the hall of the hundred Swiss, and the Princes of the royal family went to fetch them. The company was led by the Prince de Condé, grand-master of the King's household, holding in his hand a stick ornamented with diamonds and a splendid bouquet. Then came the first steward, and all the stewards with their great batons covered with velvet and golden fleurs-de-lis, also carrying bouquets. Then came Monsieur, carrying some rolls on an earthen dish. The Count d'Artois, bearing a little jug of stoneware and a little cup. The other Princes each bore an earthenware dish, with fish and vegetables, most beautifully prepared, but cold. There were twelve for each child, and if there were not Princes enough to carry them, the

vacancies were filled up by gentlemen. The King took every dish, gave it to the grand-almoner, and he to the parents of the child. They had great baskets made on purpose, and when they went out sold the food to any purchaser. As the fish were excellent, and the vegetables carefully prepared, the post of apostle was much desired, and friends were invited to come and eat. The bouquet was always included, and was not the least valuable part of the business. It is hard to think how such a number of hyacinths, narcissuses, jonquils, and even roses and lilacs, could be got at that time of year.

All the persons employed at this ceremony, and in waiting on the apostles, had one of these bouquets and a napkin. As every apostle had twelve plates, the procession was formed twelve times. The Queen and Princesses did the same in the afternoon for twelve little girls.

It was quite a day of pleasure for the young Princes; they enjoyed carrying the dishes very much. One year the unfortunate Duke d'Enghien was carrying a plate of crayfish, and he put a handful into my hat with a hearty laugh.

I may remark that it was the custom to serve up a dish of green peas to the King on Good Friday, however severe the weather might be, or whatever the time of Easter. These peas did not come from the King's gardens, but from Vincennes. A gardener was hired specially to raise them, and grew them on hot-beds by force of care and patience.

## CHAPTER IX.

## CEREMONIES.

CEREMONIES are one of the strongest ramparts of royal authority. Strip the Prince of the splendour that surrounds him, and he becomes no more than a common man in the eyes of the masses, for the populace do not respect their Sovereign so much for his virtues and rank as for the gold that covers him and the pomp around him. I am far from wishing that Princes should be always kept in a wearisome state of exhibition; they are men, and relax out of sight, thus finding easier opportunities for the exercise of benevolence; but in public it is impossible to surround them with too much state, as it commands respect, and really makes the people feel that the Sovereign is the representative on earth of the God of the universe. And no curb but the fear of God can be laid on the mighty multitude, the source of the respect and the love due to the depositary of His authority.

In these later years such were not the principles of action at Versailles. Through an ill-judged economy, or reasons arising from a different range of thought, the splendour of the throne was reduced

in many points. There was no orderliness at a public ceremony. A spectator from a distant part of the country could hardly see the King amid the crowd of officers. His jewels might be seen flashing for a moment, while the Prince ought to have been left alone, with a large circle around him, so that his subjects might consider him, become possessed of his appearance, and obtain a durable impression on their hearts.

On other occasions the Monarch's dress was hardly superior to that of his courtiers ; this simplicity was in perfect harmony with the taste of Louis XVI., and often made it hard to discern him in the midst of his Court. The ancient royal mantle was no longer in use, and when the crown had once been placed for a moment on the Monarch's head, at his coronation, it was not again seen till placed on his coffin.

I am far from thinking that a Revolution is produced by the disuse of a dress, or of a solemn ceremony ; but those who have carefully and quietly considered the causes of our complete subversion, have there detected a violation of kingly prestige that should not have been allowed ; and it is possible that M. de Saint Germain produced some effect, conducing to the destruction of the Monarchy, by his reduction of the greatest part of the King's household troops, not only because the King was deprived of a brave and incorruptible force, but also because the majesty of the throne was shorn of one of its beams.

I will now mention some ceremonies that are not

of sufficient importance to form chapters to themselves, and yet present considerable interest.

Louis XVI., a pious prince, equally attentive to his personal religious duties, and to the example due to his subjects and family, did not fail to attend once a year at Notre-Dame, to fulfil the duty of Easter Communion. This was always on Easter-Monday at eight o'clock in the morning.

The King went there in state in a carriage that, by custom, was drawn by only two horses. And two gigantic Frisians were used, that plunged at the reins that held them, and for more security were led by a groom with a halter at each side, though they had to draw the very heavy carriage with a number of persons in it. These horses were only used on Easter-Monday and on Corpus Christi day, and at other times they only went out for exercise. There were five, all black, at the small stable intended for the carriage to match. Their names were appropriate to their strength. One was called the Elephant, another Sampson, a third the Giant, and so on. When the carriage started, two pages of the chamber, and two of the stable, took post between the driver and the body of the carriage, with their faces towards the latter, standing on one foot on a little plate on the spring called "page-carrier." Twelve pages of the great stable were perched behind, and they, with the company inside the carriage, made from twenty to twenty-five persons whom these horses had to draw.

It was the practice also for the princes to use only two horses when they went to their devotions.

The Count d'Artois was the only member of the royal family who did not attend to these religious duties.

The King's carriages proceeded to Notre-Dame encircled with guards and footmen, preceded by pages and equerries, and officers of the horse-guards in white silk stockings. Arriving at the church the King, wearing a cloak of the colour of his dress, and no sword, took his place at a plain faldstool, and listened to a low mass celebrated by the grand-almoner. Before the consecration, a chaplain presented a plate full of wafers to the King, and ate one before him; then the King pointed out another to be consecrated for his communion. This was a consequence of the custom of tasting all the sovereign's food as a precaution against poison. The cloth\* was held at one side by the two chaplains in waiting, on the other by the two first officers of the crown. If a prince of the blood was present, he alone served instead of the two officers. It was only on the day of his consecration that the King received the Holy Communion in both kinds. Afterwards, a second mass was performed, and the company returned to the castle.

The Court went to Notre-Dame in still greater state on Corpus-Christi day.† The procession commenced after their arrival. A number of clergy, wearing magnificent ornaments and linen tunics of

\* Held under the hands of a recipient in the Roman Catholic church, so that no crumbs could possibly fall to the ground.

† August the seventh.



dazzling whiteness, went before the canopy, some singing the praises of God and holy canticles, others scattering perfume in the air from their censors, at a signal from the master of the ceremonies. A cloud of incense rose to Heaven, and branches of flowers scattered by young Levites covered the path of the Host, borne under a superb canopy trimmed with feathers and brilliant fringes. The Host was followed by all the Court, bearing wax tapers. This noble company marched between two ranks of guards, and two files of pages bearing torches.

After a station at an altar of rest, in a building constructed on purpose at the entrance of the Rue Dauphine, the square was crossed between two edges formed of all the royal tapestries. On nearing the court of the Ministers, a military band announced the presence of two regiments of French and Swiss guards. As soon as the canopy appeared all these men of war bent the knee, and the colours were dipped. The sight of these brave men, who would have stood firm in front of a battery, humbling themselves before the God of France, excited religious fervour in all minds.

After a station at the chapel they returned in the same order, and heard a grand mass at Notre-Dame.

The ceremony was long and painful to all; the march was wearisome from its extreme slowness; the rays of the sun fell on bare heads, and the priests were overladen with their rich ornaments.

On Palm Sunday, also, the Court went out with the clergy, bearing long dried branches of palms.



There was a gathering at the chapel-door, to listen to the thundering voice of a chaplain, the Abbé de Ganderatz, who made the arches quiver by singing the verse of the psalm, *Attollite portas*, as notice to open the doors. It is very rare to meet with so powerful a voice, it made the glass in the windows of the building shake.

Ladies were presented every Sunday after vespers in the King's cabinet. The lady who presented another mentioned her name to the King; then the lady who was presented made a gesture of wishing to kiss the King's hand, but he raised her and kissed her cheek.

The costume for ladies at Court consisted of an enormous hoop, more than three ells in circumference. And the train of the dress was of disproportionate length; it was rolled up like a little cloak-case for the ladies, as they could not take their footmen after them into the apartments. But on great days it was left at full length; and it was very hard to know how to manage all this stuff with dexterity; to keep it out of the way of passing feet, and not get entangled in it, especially in collecting alms. But the Court ladies were admirably dexterous in its management. The costume would not have been perfect without two long lappets of black lace hanging from the head-dress. This ornament was only necessary on Sundays and feast-days; on week days the ladies attending on the princesses were very simply dressed, as they were themselves.

When ambassadors married in France, the presentation of their wives required a different cere-

monial. The Court carriages went to fetch them. The introducers of the ambassadors conducted them to the Queen, and the King having entered the room by a concealed door, her Majesty herself presented the lady. At the first sight these usages seem puerile and ridiculous to us; but an instant's reflection will serve to show that full half of our own lives is spent in show and compliments, consecrated by antique usage like the Court etiquette. Horace says that habit is the sovereign ruler of the world. In a conversation we will beg a man's pardon twenty times when we have not offended him; in our letters we declare ourselves the most obedient servants of people whom we despise; indeed, in a multitude of circumstances we find our words contradicting our thoughts, in compliance with established usage.

The King gave a ceremonious supper entertainment to the new Ambassadors; but his arm-chair only was present, for neither the King nor the royal family appeared. This was the only occasion when the pages waited on the grand-equerrie, and the first gentleman of the chamber, as representing the sovereign. This attendance was not performed as in foreign courts. There I have seen the pages with napkins on their arms, waiting just the same as the footmen; it is true that they only attend to their prince, and that, if they offered a dish to the person beside him, it was received with very great politeness. It was different at Versailles in the repasts I have mentioned; the page, with his hat under his arm, took post behind

the great officer, with two footmen in the rear. When the great officer asked for a plate, the page received it from the hands of one of the servants, while the other took the one that was sent away; but when the first had been received, the page was begged to retire, with many thanks. I only saw two of these suppers, one for the Countess de Cordon, the wife of the Sardinian Ambassador, the other for that of Sweden, grand-daughter of Madame Necker. After supper, a little opera was performed, named *Syncope*, a very witty parody on the grand opera of Penelope.

The King dined in public every Sunday with the Queen, in the antechamber of her apartment. The dinner was only in show for the Queen, as she made her meal later in her private rooms. But the King ate, as I may say, with all the freedom of his character. His healthy and vigorous constitution, maintained by constant exercise, gave him an appetite that he satisfied with a good-humour that was pleasant to see.

The *grand couvert* only took place on days of ceremony, and was also in the Queen's rooms. None but the royal family were admitted, and the princes of the blood were only admitted on the day of their marriage. The King and Queen had their *ships*, or *cadenas*, near them, that is, silver-gilt trays containing salt, pepper, napkins, and knives. It will be remembered that one day when Louis XIV. was at his *grand couvert*, a packet of gold lace, that had been stolen in the chapel, was placed on the table before him. In my time, a looking-glass-

maker, who cleaned the looking-glasses of the gallery, took the lace off nearly forty window-curtains in broad day. Possibly he might have made restitution for the theft in the same manner if he had not been caught next day, when he came back to finish the robbery.

The King received any deputation of sovereign courts, of the clergy, or from his own kingdom, in his bedroom, with his hat on, seated in the arm-chair. Indeed, very often he remained standing, and nearly all the deputations made their address on their knees. When it was an extraordinary deputation, the fountains in the park were set playing, and the members were taken about in little carriages with two seats of crimson velvet and gold lace, drawn by the Swiss of the gardens, dressed in livery cassocks of the time of Louis XIV., giving them a most grotesque appearance.

M. de Dreux, Marquis de Brézé, was grand-master of ceremonies. On state occasions he wore a cloak of the colour of his dress, and habitually carried a little bâton covered with black velvet, with an ivory knob, as mark of his office. He had to direct all the ceremonies, and keep exact and detailed accounts of them; and his registers were often consulted on unforeseen occasions, or disputes for precedence. The charge of master of the ceremonies was created by Henry III., in 1585.

## CHAPTER X.

## BLUE RIBBONS.

THE timid and voluptuous Henry III., passing in turn from debauchery to the practice of devotion, instituted the order of the Saint Esprit, to calm the remorse that often arose in his mind. This order was the first in dignity of the ancient monarchy, and was maintained in all its splendours up to the last years of the third race. All the members were the greatest lords of the realm; it was more honourable than lucrative, and yet so sought for that all the vacant places were filled at once. The King held three chapters of the order every year, and afterwards received any knights promoted at the preceding chapter. These three seasons were New Year's Day, the Purification, and Pentecost. All the knights, never more than one hundred in number, attended the King's levée in full dress. It was of black velvet, with waistcoat and facings of green satin, embroidered with flames of gold, with the blue ribbon outside. The cloak was like the coat, and fastened over the grand collar of the order, composed of devices in enamel and cyphers of Henry III.; below hung an

eight-pointed star, and the same was embroidered in silver on the cloak.

After the King's levée, the chapter was held in the council-room, and the usher of the order proclaimed the names of new knights. Then the procession began, and proceeded to the chapel through the grand apartments. The march was led by the ushers and officers of the order. Then came the novices, in the costume of the time of the founder; that is to say, with stockings turned down, pantaloons of white silk, slippers of black velvet, doublet of cloth of silver trimmed with lace, the short cloak of black damask, and the cap clasped with a diamond and heron plume. Old men often looked ridiculous in this foppish dress, though it might be suitable to the young. Madame de Sévigné has preserved some interesting anecdotes of the embarrassments of the recipients of the famous and numerous brevet of 1638, especially about MM. de Montchevreuil and Villars, whose silver lace became so entangled that they could not be separated, endangering the gravity of the ceremony, as much as the very tight stockings of Marshal d'Hocquincourt.\*

After the novices, came the knights, two and two, in the order of their reception. The procession was closed by the princes and the King, followed by all his house.

The family of Rohan, after the advance of their claim to be treated as sovereigns, refused the blue

\* Madame de Sévigné, letter of January 3, 1689.



ribbon, because the nobles of this name wanted to walk with the princes of the blood, and not in the order of their appointment.

After mass had been celebrated by a prelate, commander of the order, the King ascended a throne of green velvet with golden flames over it placed on the Gospel side.\* The aspirant was led by the masters of ceremonies between two sponsors chosen from the old knights. After a number of reverences, not made by bending the body, but the knees, like women's curtsies, they approached the throne. The novice recited the oath prescribed in the statutes of the order, at the King's feet, and then received the collar and great cloak of black velvet with golden flames over it, with the lining and hood of orange satin, he also received the rosary, and a book of the lesser office of the Holy Spirit with an injunction to recite it every day. I fancy most of the knights easily forgot this obligation; but Louis XVI. was very particular in performing this duty, and it did not require more than a quarter of an hour every day.

After the ceremony, the King was conducted back to his apartments in the same order as in coming from them.

A person must be thirty years of age to be received as a knight of the order. The princes of the blood were admitted after their first Communion, and the King's sons on the day of their birth. I saw the children of the Count d'Artois

\* North side.



admitted, and those of the Duke of Orleans, and also the Duke d'Enghien.

The ancient order of Saint Michael instituted by Louis XI. and profusely distributed, was appropriated to artists and scholars, after the institution of the Saint Esprit. The distinction was a broad black ribbon, and members were received by a knight of the Saint Esprit in the church of the great convent of the Cordeliers at Paris. But all the blue ribbons received that of Saint Michael likewise, for they were members of the King's orders.

The order of Saint Louis, destined as a reward for bravery in war, held its chapter on the day of Saint Louis. All the knights, the grand crosses and commanders were present at mass in the dress of their military rank. The distinction was, for the grand crosses, a broad red ribbon, and the device embroidered in gold on the coat, and for the commanders the ribbon without the device. The princes of the blood did not receive this cross till after making a campaign.

The King habitually wore the blue ribbon, a little cross of Saint Louis, and the Golden Fleece, sent him by the King of Spain in exchange for the blue ribbon.

There was besides in France the order of Saint Lazare or of Mount Carmel; they had been separate at first, but were united. The first was created by Henry IV., while the other went back to the time of the Crusades. The King nominated the grand-master, and in my time it was Monsieur who held the office. He went to hold a chapter three times

a year at the Ecole Militaire at Paris. The insignia of the order were an enamel cross hung to the neck by a green watered ribbon, and the same cross embroidered on the coat. The little cross was given only to the pupils of the Ecole Militaire who distinguished themselves by their good conduct and application. They wore it at the button-hole on a claret ribbon.

The order of the Saint Esprit was suppressed in 1791 by a decree of the National Assembly, only preserving the cross of Saint Louis.

## CHAPTER XI.

## BEDS OF JUSTICE.

TWICE I beheld those imposing ceremonies, when the first body in the State was in conflict with the royal authority. In the later times of the monarchy the Parliaments had sought to change themselves into a deliberative body and legislative power, thus changing the essence of our ancient government and making it an aristocracy, for the power would no longer have been in the hands of a single individual. In order to give some information respecting the attributes and authority of Parliament I will borrow from the light of Ferrand, himself a member of Parliament, and both a writer of judgment and a distinguished magistrate, himself deriving inspiration from the celebrated President de Harlay.

The Parliament was originally nothing but the King's council, but was severed from him when it was declared stationary, and ceased to follow him with the army or on journeys. But it always continued to be the King's adviser, and gave its opinion of laws that the privy council had presented, or the King himself proposed. Ferrand says, "The sovereign consults

it; enlightened by its opinion, he declares his own, and his own becomes law. If, having weighed the remarks, the sovereign decides that the law should be enacted, he must be obeyed because there must be only one authority in the state." I think this passage will make the institution of the bed of justice sufficiently understood; it was only an assembly where the King declared to the Parliament that his intention was to put this law in force, and where he gave orders it should be registered to become valid. "They can only allow themselves passive opposition to this last measure, and will never erect a rival authority to that of which they are only custodians. The Parliament not only endeavours to enlighten the King by a passive and well founded resistance, and indeed often succeeds; sometimes by its respectful firmness it obtains a complete victory."

Such was nearly the duty and conduct of these bodies in the most ancient times. What a contrast is this wise bearing to that we have seen it ambitiously usurping in our day! How far from this passive opposition were the numerous attempts to elevate their power to the level of or above that of the King; these factious refusals to register laws whose wisdom we could recognise every day, in the urgent need for new taxes; the fiery protests; the stubborn resistance that required severity from the King; and, lastly, the obscure intrigues that excited the populace to undertake the defence of magistrates they were taught to look upon as tribunes! Thus did the Parliament blindly and im-

prudently dig the abyss which was to engulf both themselves and the Monarchy.

The first bed of justice that I saw was in 1787, under the Ministry of M. de Calonne, to register an edict on the augmentation of *twentieths*; and it was the resistance of Parliament that induced the King to convoke a first Assembly of Notables, and this brought on the fall of M. de Calonne.

The second was provoked by Cardinal de Brienne, in consequence of the refusal of Parliament to register several edicts, notably that which instituted the famous court of plenary jurisdiction, which the Parliament dreaded the more because it seemed to be the establishment of a superior legislative power. This time the resistance was of a very marked character; the representations assumed such a factious and violent tone, that the King rose from the throne before dismissing the assembly, and cried in a loud and indignant voice, "You have heard my will, I desire that it may be carried out."

Here follows pretty nearly the ceremonial of these kind of assemblies. At Versailles they were always held in the grand hall of the body-guards. The throne was placed in the angle where the door opening on the marble staircase is situated. The kings were formerly seated on a throne of gold, say the ancient historians, because parliaments were held in the open country. When they were assembled within palaces, a throne or dais with cushions was substituted; and as a dais was formerly called a bed, the throne, whereon the King sat in a court of his parliament, was called a bed of justice.

The seat was formed of five cushions. The King was seated on one, one was at his back, two served as arms, and the fifth was under his feet. Charles V. renewed these ornaments. Afterwards Louis XII. had them perfectly restored, and it is believed that the same throne was in existence down to the last. It was of violet velvet powdered with golden fleurs-de-lis, and the whole of the hall was hung with the same stuff.

The Parliament assembled first and waited for the King in the hall; the monarch arrived preceded by his household, and a deputation of presidents in flat caps who went to receive him at the top of the stairs. His dress was of violet velvet, cloak of the same, and a plumed hat; all the officers were similarly dressed, but in different colours.

When seated on the throne the King had the grand-chamberlain, or his representative, at his feet. As the Duke de Bouillon was exiled from the Court, the Duke de Villequier performed his duties at the bed of justice on the 8th of May, 1788. By the King's side was the grand equerry, with the King's sword hanging to his neck. This sword was formerly borne by the constable, before this office was suppressed under Louis XIII. The chancellor, or keeper of the seals, was in a chair with arms, clothed in a gown of purple. At the foot of the throne stood the ushers of the chamber with their maces of silver gilt; these were the remains of the ancient weapons of the sergeants-at-arms who had accompanied the King, ever since the life of Philip Augustus had been threatened by the Old Man of the

Mountain. Ushers have been successors to the sergeants, and the mace that had served them for defence became a mere thing of parade in the hands of their representatives. In the middle of the floor knelt the heralds, clothed with their tunics or coats-of-arms of violet velvet. On each side of the throne were the princes of the blood, the peers lay and ecclesiastic, the marshals of France, the knights of the Saint Esprit and others.

The King seated, wearing his hat, made a very short speech, and then left to the chancellor the business of developing the ideas enfolded in it. Then, according to circumstances, the members of parliament and the King's people spoke and gave their opinions. The chancellor received the King's orders, and the ceremony usually terminated with an injunction to the secretary to register the edict that had been discussed, or to obliterate protestations subversive of the King's authority from the register.

In order that the King might not have to make a very long circuit to go to the bed of justice in 1788, he was conducted through the apartments of Marshal Duras at the head of the marble staircase, as there was a private entrance to them from the hall of the hundred Swiss. The marshal was suffering from illness, and was obliged to retire into a little dressing-room.

I should not have mentioned this circumstance did I not believe that these were the apartments of Madame de Maintenon. I have often asked in vain what room she occupied; could never find out, and the memoirs of the time do not give



precise information. I am aware that a letter dated from Fontainebleau on the 19th of March, 1658, addressed to Madame de Saint Geran, informs us that she occupied the Queen's rooms there. She writes, "All your gossip magnifies matters fancifully; it is only by necessity, and temporarily, that I occupy the Queen's apartments, so I have only put in some very plain furniture." But as she herself says, it was only temporarily, and at Fontainebleau, and nothing shows that she had the same place in other royal mansions, and especially at Versailles. The contrary appears very nearly certain. Again, with the exception of the Queen's rooms, none of those below the King's chambers would suit her. We read that the crowd of courtiers waited for her passing by, or in the antechamber, to solicit her favour or obtain a look from the King, when either of them went out; and this crowd could hardly have found room in the narrow passages and dark staircases leading to those apartments occupied in succession by Madame de Pompadour, and Madame Dubarry, in the reign of Louis XV., and the Duke de Villequier in that of Louis XVI. Besides Voltaire, scarcely a cotemporary, says that the apartment of Madame de Maintenon was on the same level as that of the King. So I cannot see any but that of Marshal Duras that she could have occupied with propriety. It was large and convenient, in easy reach of the King's, so that he could go there at all hours and receive the Court there when his bonds of union with Madame de Maintenon were generally suspected, if not perfectly known.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THEATRES.

**D**URING the winter, from the month of December to Easter, the various companies acting in Paris came to Versailles to wait upon the Court. Tuesday was devoted to tragedy, Thursday to French comedy, Friday to the comic opera. The grand opera was only performed five or six times each winter, and that was on a Wednesday. Louis XVI. generally preferred tragedy and comedy, and attended very constantly. Knowing all the great poets well, and justly appreciating their beauties, possessed of an excellent memory, the King then found himself in his element, while from his unmusical ear, he was not likely to enjoy the opera and could not help yawning. I really never heard anyone sing so out of tune as the poor King; happily, music is not a necessary qualification for a ruler. In compensation, he was especially charmed with the fine melodious verse of Racine. I remember that, one evening on retiring, at Fontainebleau, a tragedy of that poet was mentioned that had just been exhibited on the stage. One of the courtiers tried to recite some lines, and

broke down. The King took the word, and gave us the whole scene, with a truth of rendering that showed his taste and knowledge.

To that visit to Fontainebleau I always ascribed the savage hatred of the poet Chénier to kings, and especially to Louis XVI.

Then for the first time\* was represented his first tragedy, named *Azémire*, the subject of which was taken from the Crusades. Possibly he had expected to be more indulgently received at the Court than in the City, and thought that his piece would escape shipwreck through the reverence that excluded hissing in the King's presence. Really there never was such a ridiculous tragedy. A knight-crusader was captivated by the charms of a young Mussulman lady, like Rinaldo in the palace of Armida. All his brothers-in-arms essayed in vain to make him blush for his weakness; none of the beautiful lectures addressed to him could remove his blindness; he remained insensible to everything, even to this beautiful apostrophe! "What will the French say?—what will your old father say?" An actor, named Dorival, had to repeat these bad verses; his pronunciation was laboured, but that did not prevent his being very good at argumentative parts, where he never made a mistake. But on that day his tongue got so confused that there was heard: "What will the French say?—what will God the Father say?" This strange version was received with an immense burst of laughter, and the very actors were infected. But at the end of the fourth

\* November 4, 1786.

act, a shrill and prolonged hiss arose from the upper part of the theatre. As I mentioned above, this was quite unheard of at the representations before the Court. This breach of respect, the position of the fenced box where the King took his place, all seemed to show that the King alone could have emitted this unfortunate note, which made a sure mark on the ear of M. Chénier, hatched his monstrous tragedy of Charles IX., and made him an irreconcilable enemy of kings.

This is the judgment of La Harpe on the unfortunate tragedy of Azémire, in a letter to the Grand-Duke of Russia, afterwards Paul I. : “ A M. Chénier, a young aspirant, who professes immense contempt for our best writers, has had a tragedy called Azémire acted at Fontainebleau, that was outrageously hissed from beginning to end.”

The theatre at the castle of Versailles was situated in the alley on the right of the royal court. This side of the castle had been rebuilt at a later date, and the new style did not agree well with the severe taste and sombre tint of the work of Louis XIV. The theatre did not hold many people, but the stage was large, and could be used for the representation of the operas most loaded with actors and scenery. All the accessories of the hall were convenient, and the interior decoration splendid. The boxes were lined with draperies of blue watered silk ; those where the royal family sat had a railing in front, and were on the ground-tier. All persons who had not the right of entry through their offices, put down their names with the captain of the guards to

get tickets, as it was part of his duty to answer for all persons who approached the King. The pages of the chamber had their places in the box of the first gentlemen, and thence we carried their orders to the stage by a little staircase. The old Marshal de Duras, always gallant, often sent us to fetch the actresses to his box, to receive a compliment, or sometimes a kiss; he advised us to kiss their hands as we led them back, and the virtuous Idamé, or haughty Aménaïde, would go down the tortuous stair, not on the arm of a mandarin or a knight of Syracuse, but on that of a page, with his hat under his arm.

The King settled the time for the play according to its length, as he did not choose to keep the officers who came for the countersign waiting, and always went out at nine o'clock exactly himself to go to the supper with Madame. In the morning M. Desentellès, manager of the *menus plaisirs*, presented him with the programme containing the list of parts, the names of the actors to take them, and the time the play would last. Every representation was costly, for carriages were provided for the actors to come from Paris, and all the body and stage of the theatre were lighted with wax candles.

The choir of the chapel was the orchestra; and though Kreutzer, Bezozzi, and Salentin were heard among them, things might have been better done, because the singers were not used to the musicians, and the latter more used to playing motets than operas.

Besides the theatre I have mentioned, there was

one at the end of the castle, on the north side; perhaps the handsomest in Europe, except those of Italy. Plays were seldom acted there, on account of its size and the necessary expenditure. Only one fête was given there during the four years I knew Versailles. The theatre was larger than any in Paris, and the total height of the building was a hundred and twenty feet. The sight was magnificent when all the Court were assembled there. The numerous lustres and splendid dresses were reflected from the looking-glass that covered the boxes. The depth below the stage was frightful to see through any of the traps when open, and one might well think so, as the son of the mechanist, Boulet, was unlucky enough to fall through and was crushed.

When a Court entertainment was to be given, several rows of boxes were erected on the stage, and these, with the fixed boxes, completed the oval. The decoration of these boxes seemed like the reflection from precious stones, so brilliant was the effect of the gilding. The last of these entertainments was given for the Count Du Nord, the Emperor of Russia, Paul I.; only the body of the theatre was lighted up. As for the East Indian ambassadors I shall mention below, it was they themselves that were the beauty or rather the curiosity of the sight, going on the stage and falling into ecstasy at all the scenes that were represented by perspective in relief when really flat. I may add that the famous banquet of the body-guard was held in this theatre a few days before the 5th of October, and served for an excuse for that miserable day.



There was, besides, a public theatre in the town. The ground-tier was occupied by five or six boxes, always filled with a portion of the hundred and fifty pages then at Versailles. They carried out a severe discipline on the pieces, on the actors, and even on the pit, though they often gave occasion for quarrels. I saw several break out. One day a page of the great stable, called Frébois, was eating a hot milk posset on the front of his box, when a bad joker in the pit called out, "Down with the posset." M. de Frébois rose with the utmost quietness, took up the jug and sprinkled the contents over the pit, as they turned over with a loud laugh to escape the hot liquid.

In this theatre I heard a joke that showed how far disrespect for the Royal Family had already advanced, they being present in a box taken for them, and it might almost have given cause to foresee their fate. The opera of Paesiello, called King Theodore at Venice, was going on in 1788. In the scene where the King's servant, telling their host of his master's pecuniary embarrassment, several times repeats, "What shall we do?" a voice from the pit replied, "Assemble the Notables!"

I may here remark that all Versailles lived by the benefits of the Court, and yet no town in France appeared so bitter against royalty. The ingratitude of man never appeared under a more revolting aspect. And the actual fate of the town shows us how just is the saying of La Fontaine—

"Ungrateful beings never fail  
A miserable death to meet."



## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE QUEEN'S BALLS.

I HAVE already mentioned certain retrenchments that effected a diminution of the respect which the magnificence and pomp of entertainments and ceremonies naturally keep up in the minds of subjects for the royal authority. The charming entertainments I am now going to mention seemed to have escaped this proscription. The nobility and magnificence worthy of a great king always shone out then, as well as a gallantry worthy of France. They were not given up till after the time of M. de Calonne, the famous minister, even more eminent for his capacity than for the calumny showered on him, who would not allow the last beams of royal majesty to be extinguished. If he dug the abyss deeper by increasing the deficit, at least he was able with his powerful arm to sustain the monarchy from tumbling over the brink, and he would have saved it if everybody had been disinterested and courageous enough to support his designs.

The last of the balls was in 1787. I only saw them two winters. The King gave them to the

Queen every Wednesday, from the beginning of the year till Lent.

The pages of the chamber had to do the honours. They had to be there first—had to lead the ladies to their places, offer them refreshments, and again take them to supper, or to their carriages. Accustomed to the world of the great, they applied the ingenuousness of their youth, and the good breeding of their rank, to the performance of these duties. Strangers were always struck with the sight of these good little managers, most of them with the roses of childhood still on their faces, taking infinite pains, running, calling, hurrying the servants at the refreshment tables, leading out the ladies, without seeming surprised at this magnificence, or wearied with the weight of their splendid dresses.

There was an old theatre in the part of the castle to the right of the royal court, which had been abandoned as too small. The entertainments were held there. Several of the wooden pavilions kept at the *Hôtel des Menus Plaisirs* were added, that could be set up in a few minutes, ornamented in a few hours, and made moveable palaces. The arrangement was often changed, and the ball-room of 1786 was especially remarkable for its elegance.

The entrance led into a verdant thicket, with statues and rose-bushes in it, with an open temple at the end, and a billiard-table in it. The somewhat gloomy foliage of the grove rendered the illumination of the billiard-table the more dazzling. On the right, little alleys led to the rooms for dancing and for play; and one of the doors was filled with a great

sheet of unsilvered plate glass, so transparent that a Swiss had to be posted there to prevent any clumsy people coming through. This was in order that the billiard-players might not lose the sight of the dance, and yet the warmth of this fine room not escape.

The ball-room was an oblong, reached by a few descending steps. There was a gallery all round, that allowed room to pass between the columns, without interference with the dancing. Persons who had not been presented, and were permitted to enter the boxes, were allowed to look on from them, and the pages took care to have refreshments carried there. At the other end of the dancing-room was the refreshment-table, and that terminated the view from the card-room. It was in a semicircle. There were enormous baskets of fruit and pastry between antique urns filled with liquors, whose colour was visible by the reflection of the light. Four marble shells held fountains that flowed all night, and produced a pleasant coolness in the dancing-room, while a number of heating pipes warmed the other apartments.

There was nothing at all forgotten. Two maids were waiting in a dressing-room to repair any injuries to the dress that might occur in the heat of the dance; and as the arrangements of the dancing-room had only left a semicircular space for this room, it was lined with looking-glasses, so as to produce a perfect illusion, and give it the appearance of being perfectly circular.

The dresses were simple and elegant. The gentlemen were in dress-clothes, and danced with their

plumed hats on their heads, a noble and graceful fashion that I never saw in use except at the Court of France. Several men wore black coats trimmed with jet, and these dresses were very brilliant, from the reflexion of the lustres in the trimming.

A person must be "carriage company," that is to say, have been presented, to have the *entrée* to these balls and to dance there. Any one on duty could be present, but could not dance nor sit down to table. There were not even any exceptions to the officers of the Guards; and so several of them used to make interest with us to let them come and join our supper-table, laid in a separate room.

Supper was served at midnight, in the old theatre. There were twelve places at each table, and people of the same set kept together. The King's and Queen's footmen waited. The most delicate and studied dishes were provided in plenty. The royal family often had their supper at the ball: the King never came there till after he had had his supper, at nine o'clock, in his own rooms. He stayed till one o'clock, and went to bed after a game at trictrac in a little room intended for that amusement. This prince, being an admirer of morality and moderation, did not like high play. He seldom risked losing more than two louis of an evening. At one of these balls four young men, whose names I forget, except the young Belsunce, who was murdered at Caen during the Revolution, were playing rather too high at billiards. The King came into the room, and asked why they were not dancing; they said they were resting a little, and assured the King that they

were not betting high. Next morning it was found out that the losses had amounted to fifteen or eighteen hundred louis, and the King banished the four young men to their regiments.

Though Louis XVI. was so good-natured and simple, his rank and his virtues were a little oppressive. He retired early, because he knew that the ball was much gayer and more lively when he was gone. The strictness of the etiquette diminished; the old young men, whose years were too many for mingling in these pleasures, would then take the liberty of a country-dance, or a "Sir Roger." They could be distinguished by their bare heads, for they were not supposed to come for the sake of dancing, and were not dressed accordingly.

The Queen, Madame Elizabeth, the Count d'Artois, and the Duke de Bourbon, who had given up dancing, would do it once in a way for a wonder, and there never had been so much decorum at the Court and at the same time so much bright liveliness.

The best dancers of the time were the MM. de l'Aigle, who were afterwards surpassed, because this frivolous art has become the object of persevering study, requiring youth and practice, and because twenty years had gone by since their first success. The best lady-dancer was Madame d'Agoult or Mademoiselle de Bellemont, who afterwards quitted her husband for Rovère of the Convention, whom she chose to follow to the marshes of Guiana; but finding him dead, very soon supplied the loss, not with M. d'Agoult, but with

the captain of the English vessel she sailed in. O morals !”

These brilliant nights were only ended by the break of day. We led the ladies to their carriages, after giving them soup and refreshments, and went to seek our well-earned repose, with our pockets full of sugar-plums and oranges, the remains of the splendid supper laid for us. Sometimes it happened that the noise and enjoyment could not prevent several pages from falling asleep.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE INDIAN EMBASSY.

CURIOSITY is always excited by these extraordinary embassies coming from the ends of the earth; they often mark periods in history, not so much by the importance of the negotiations as by the rarity of their occurrence.

All France was greatly excited and attention attracted by the embassy sent to Louis XVI., in 1788, by Tippoo Sahib, King of Mysore, the successor of Hyder Ali. Our conversation was long occupied, and our fashions formed on the manners, habits and dress of these Indians. They were treated without much consideration or ceremony, either because the Minister did not attach much importance to their demands, or because the troubles of the time were beginning to be felt. The object of their lengthy journey was to endeavour to obtain the protection of France as a counterpoise to the formidable power of the English in India. It is quite possible that, but for the Revolution, the Government might have been wise enough to adopt the views of the Sultan, who already foresaw the fall of his empire, and his own burial under



the ruins of Seringapatam. Afterwards, the Directory, and before them the Committee of Public Safety, contented themselves with sending some desperate revolutionists into that country, who treated Tippoo Sahib as a citizen sultan, and wanted to teach the rights of man to an Asiatic despot.

The embassy landed at Toulon, reached Paris on the 16th of July, 1788, and was quartered in the Rue Bergère, at the Hotel of the Menus Plaisirs, which had been prepared for them. It was composed of three ambassadors, two young relatives of the Sultan, and upwards of thirty servants. The names of the ambassadors were Mohammed Dervish Khan, brother-in-law of the Sultan, and head of their religion; Mohammed Osman Khan, and Akbar Ali Khan, general of cavalry, conspicuous for his great height, his bold bearing, and white beard.

On the 12th of August the embassy reached the Great Trianon in the evening; it had been prepared for their reception, and the avenues were filled with an immense crowd of spectators. The three ambassadors and the interpreters were in three carriages, with the King's liveries. They were taken to the apartments in the right wing, and I entered with them. They seemed to admire the beauty of the garden and palace very much. The Dervish afterwards said his prayers, and requested the removal of the carpet as containing some representations of men, and the general told stories of tiger-hunts, boasting his courage and skill in meeting this formidable creature in its rage.

The next day the solemn audience took place. The throne had been prepared in the Hall of Hercules, and all around chairs were arranged for the royal family, and for the Court, in their most elegant toilette.

The ambassadors entered the castle by the great marble staircase, crossed the Queen's apartments, the grand gallery, and all the halls, where rows of seats had been raised and were filled with spectators from Paris. After mass, the King took his seat on the throne, and the masters of ceremonies went to fetch the embassy from the waiting-room, in a hall of the royal court.

The party then traversed the suite of fourteen apartments, full of elegant women, whose appearance seemed to strike the strangers very much. The three envoys were preceded by the masters of ceremonies and the interpreters, and followed by their attendants, some of them being their guard, with no mark of nationality but their caps, in a kind of European uniform of red and green morocco, which afterwards served as a model for the equipment of a corps of sepoys.

On reaching the hall, the chief of the embassy made a speech, and it was interpreted, as well as the King's reply. He then presented his credentials, wrapped in a piece of cloth of gold, and twenty-one pieces of money, as a homage of respect.

After the conclusion of the audience, they requested a few minutes to enjoy the splendid spectacle of the assembled Court, and were afterwards

conducted in the previous order to the house of M. de la Luzerne, the Minister for Naval Affairs, and dined with him.

In the afternoon they were conducted through the gardens, with all the fountains playing, drawn in the little carriages I have mentioned above, an immense crowd being attracted by the unusual spectacle. I observed that all these Indians generally, either from indolence or some other reason, appeared to take but little notice of anything they saw, or of the magnificence of the palace of Versailles. I was by the side of the carriage that contained the chief of the embassy and the Minister; just as the latter was pointing out the Basin of Neptune, in which more than a hundred spouts of water rose instantly in the air on the turning of a key. The Indian was engaged in scratching the lower part of his legs; he raised his eyes for a moment to the grand spectacle, and then dropped them on his slippers at once.

Afterwards, the ambassadors returned to Paris. A short time before their departure, in the month of October, they returned to Versailles to hunt with the King, and afterwards proceeded to Brest, on their return to their own country, to embark on board a frigate commanded by Captain Macnamara, whose crew mutinied and murdered him on his return.

The ambassadors received some company during their stay at Trianon. I went to see them several times, in order to form an idea of their manners and habits. Every time that I saw them in state in the

room, a slave brought pipes and poured perfumed water over our hands. The pipes were long leather tubes, with an amber mouthpiece attached to one bowl that was placed on a large scent-vessel, so arranged that the tobacco-smoke issued through a tube below the surface of perfumed water, and was cleansed before it reached the inhaling tube.

The kingdom of Mysore is situated in the Peninsula, on this side of the Ganges, so the inhabitants are very swarthy, and of copper colour. Their dress, like that of most nations of southern Asia, is composed of large drawers and robes of muslin or cotton cloth more or less fine. I never saw any gold embroidery but on their shawls, which they wrapped round them according to the degree of cold. Their turbans are not so high as those of the Turks, but much larger. The slaves wore some of the shape of our round hats, and these were a becoming head-dress when placed on the side of the head. Many of these slaves had lived in Pondicherry, and spoke a little French, as did one of the youths, who were far more intelligent than could have been expected.

These Indians only ate the flesh of animals killed by themselves, with certain rites of purification; they had also taken the precaution of bringing their own cooks, and it was by no means one of the least curious sights to the public to go and see their meals prepared in the basement of the Trianon. The quantity of spices, pepper, curry, and especially of garlic, that they put in, made their

dishes intolerable to a European palate. I tasted one.

I still seem to see one of their cooks sitting cross-legged on the corner of a table, and kneading balls of rice and meat with his hands. The Queen also wished to taste their Indian cookery, but she could not bear the quantity of seasoning in it.

One day the ambassadors came to see the pages' riding-school, and the two young men endeavoured to ride our horses; but their seat, with very short stirrups, and knees raised high, would not do with horses accustomed to be ridden with all the perfection and refinement of art.

They were more successful in hunting, and rode their horses with great boldness. The ambassadors followed the chase in a *calèche*, wrapped up in the shawls to protect themselves from the chill of an October fog, which made them feel the difference between the climate of Paris and that of Seringapatam.

The presents given by this embassy were not considerable. They consisted of some pieces of very beautiful muslin, well-made Indian weapons, and a little box of valuable pearls. They received in exchange a good many Lyons silks, clocks, and Sèvres porcelain. The Queen had their effigies constructed in wax, and made a group of them, with the interpreter and a slave smoking their pipes in one of the huts in the Trianon. The likeness was perfect.

It was asserted at the time that Tippoo Sahib

was displeased at the ill success of the ambassadors, and put them to death on their return. It is certain that, if the Revolution had not occurred, great advantage might have been gained by alliance with Tippoo, as his power had been increased by the successes of Hyder Ali, and with the assistance of the French would have attracted all the Nawabs who were crushed or tyrannised over by the English, and so a counterpoise to the colossal power of our neighbours in the East Indies might have been raised up.

It was at very nearly the same time that there was a very much less ceremonious reception at Versailles of the son of a King of Cochin-China, of the age of eight years, introduced by a missionary, to request the aid of France in favour of his father, who had been deposed by a usurper. This missionary, Monseigneur Pierre Georges Pigneau, Bishop of Adran, had attached himself to the sovereign of Cochin-China when his dynasty was overturned by some rebels, and had then offered an asylum at his house to the brother of the last king, up to about the year 1779, when the evicted monarch succeeded in reconquering a portion of his estates. But it was only a momentary return to power, for he was again expelled in 1782, and the bishop as well, and obliged to take refuge in an island in the Gulf of Siam. Thence, after all these vicissitudes, did the prelate start to solicit the protection of France, furnished with the royal seal, and accompanied by the young heir.

He reached Pondicherry on the 27th of February,



1785, and by the assistance of French merchants, who perceived the advantages and results of his projects, the Bishop of Adran made his way to L'Orient in the month of February, 1787. But little attention was paid to the requests of the bishop in France, for the minds of men were pre-occupied with the clouds gathering on the horizon. At last, after many objections and difficulties, a treaty was signed in November by the Count de Montmorin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which assistance in ships and men was granted under certain conditions. But on the arrival of Monseigneur Pigneau in India, in March 1788, fresh obstacles had arisen to thwart the designs of the missionary, now entitled Minister Plenipotentiary of the King of France, quite as much from the ill-will and jealousy of the French leaders as from the multiplication of events of a threatening nature. However, he succeeded in obtaining some assistance, particularly some French officers, for the dethroned monarch, whom he rejoined at the end of October, 1789, with his pupil, being conveyed by the frigate *Meduse* commanded by M. de Rasily. With this slight assistance, and through successes obtained during his son's absence, the King succeeded in regaining his crown in 1792. This was the condition of the country when Lord Macartney touched there in 1793. The King, Nguyen Anh, maintained his advantage, thanks to the confidence he continued to repose in the bishop, seconded by the French officers, though there were many intrigues through the jealousy of the great. But his worthy minister



did not live long enough to see him in peaceable possession of his estates. He was carried off by dysentery in October, 1799. His pupil only survived him by two years, and died of the small-pox in 1801. King Nguyen Anh caused the greatest honour to be paid to the body of the missionary, and conveyed tokens of his gratitude to his family.

This King, one of the greatest sovereigns in Asia during modern times, only died on the 25th of January, 1820.

## CHAPTER XV.

## TRIANON.

THE enemies of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette sought subjects on which to found their most absurd calumnies more especially in her visits, or, according to the habitual expression, journeys to the little Trianon. According to these kites,\* here was the reef to wreck the morality and cause the ruin of France. And yet, is it not very natural that it should be pleasant for a sovereign always in state, in the midst of the chains of the most rigorous etiquette, to be able to retire to some solitary mansion to escape from the weight of greatness. From all time our kings have had their little places of retirement. Isabeau of Bavaria plotted the ruin of France in the little Hôtel Barbette. Francis the First forgot the disasters of the battle of Pavia in the Little Bourbon, Rue Git-le-Cœur, at the feet of the Duchess d'Etampes. And numbers of ourselves, under the labour of important employment in the heart of a town, sigh for a country retreat, and to taste the charms of solitude. Sovereigns, it is true, may find, if they choose, more opportunity for the free scope of their passions in

\* *Hobereaux*, kites, the term for the rapacious *petit noblesse* of the provinces.

these retired spots, far from all state. But they would then have to take certain precautions that the Queen knew nothing of, because she never so much as dreamt of the wickednesses that the base imagination of her revilers invented for her.

She never slept at Trianon, except in her journeys, and they were so rare that I only saw two repetitions during four years, and then the Queen's whole household accompanied her. The King spent the day there, and Madame Elizabeth, a perfect example of every virtue, made her abode there. Might not such an ægis have protected the Queen from any suspicion?

There is no need to dwell further on this subject. We have lived in such unhappy times that even in the midst of the thickets of Trianon, amid the roses and perfumes, all our most cheerful ideas make their escape, to leave us plunged, against our will, in sorrowful remembrance, and raise the recollection "that queens have been seen to weep like common women, and surprise has been felt at the quantity of tears that the eyes of kings contain."

The price of this mansion has been very much exaggerated, but it was very far from surpassing the bounds of the allowable expenditure of a great king. Besides, it had been built by Louis XV., and nothing but the embellishments introduced by the change of tastes and ideas could be set down to the subsequent reign. It is even now easy to ascertain that this mansion was not so magnificent but that those of many bankers were more sumptuous; and the beauty of the garden arose less from its value than from the tastefulness of its arrangement.

The house is a square detached block, ornamented in the Corinthian style, and too small to afford more than the necessary lodging for a Queen of France. A dining-room, a drawing-room, a billiard-room, a bedroom, and some dressing-rooms, composed the first floor; the second only contained some small rooms for Madame Elizabeth and the ladies of the palace.

The furniture was more remarkable for its elegance than its magnificence, and there was far more splendour in many hotels in Paris. The drawing-room was adorned with paintings, the bedroom had muslin hangings, with embroidery and brilliant colours that in some sort rivalled the most practiced pencil. Some portraits of the children of Maria Theresa brought the Queen back to the bosom of her family, where she might have found more happiness, if less splendour. But while these pictures aroused sweet emotions in her heart, they must have inspired most serious reflexions, for all these Princes and Princesses were represented as monks and nuns digging their own graves. The only luxury of the adjoining dressing-room consisted of two looking-glasses that rose out of the floor by a spring, and could darken the room by covering the windows. But the times we live in are not those when a small Venetian mirror was a present worthy of a king; all our actresses and the most simple ladies of the middle class now have looking-glasses of the largest size.

The famous table that was once in the castle at Choisy, was fitted in the dining-room by means of

balance weights and other mechanical secrets it went down into the lower story to be laid with a fresh course.

Three sides of the block of the Trianon presented three different aspects combined in unison with wonderful art. One of these faces, symbolic of France, looked over a garden laid out in the taste of Le Nôtre and his cotemporaries. Orange trees and statues were alternated in niches of verdure, and adorned a grass-plot with a theatre at the end, that had a stage large enough for the most complicated operas, though the body of it was very small. I have been told that the Queen acted plays there more than once.\* It is a fact that in the month of September, 1785, *The Barber of Seville* was played there to a very small audience. The Queen acted Rosina with all possible elegance and truth; the Count d'Artois played Figaro, M. de Vaudreuil acted Count Almavira, and the parts of Bartholo and Bazile were filled by MM. de Guiche and de Crussol. The piece was played with an agreement and unity unusual in these gatherings of society.

As to Louis XVI., he never took any part in these performances as an actor. This Prince had graver occupations, and it might be said with the poet that he was never seen

To make himself a Roman spectacle,  
Or go to waste his voice upon the stage.

In front of the house was a lawn, where, to

\* Lady Clementina Davies mentions that her father had acted there with the Queen.

use the simple expression of an ancient poet,

So tenderly, so daintily,  
So smilingly, the wave  
With babbling voice caressingly  
The verdant banks doth lave.

At the end was a rock shaded by pine-trees, cypresses, and larches, and a rustic bridge over the stream, such as is found in the Swiss mountains and the precipices of the Valais. This rustic and wild prospect made that on the third side of the mansion seem more sweet, where the temple of Love became visible amid flowers and laurel groves, as in Italy. A splendid statue, by the sculptor Bouchardon, represented the god in all the beauty of youth, shaping out of a piece of wood the bow he uses for piercing hearts. The Senate now possesses this elegant piece of sculpture.

The other notable points of this charming dwelling were an octagon room of marble, very elegant and commodious for the performance of a concert, and a grotto that has furnished so much matter for malice, that I may omit saying anything as to its employment.

A mass of rustic rocks rose at the bottom of a little thickly-shaded valley, and a stream that made a thousand windings in a meadow enamelled with flowers there disappeared in a rapid. By following its windings through many turns, the entrance of a grotto was reached, so dark that the eyes were dazzled at first, and required some time to discover anything. The grotto was carpeted with moss, and

refreshed by the brook flowing through it. A couch, also of moss, was an invitation to repose. But either by chance, or by the architect's intention, a crevice was open at the head of the couch, and gave a view of the whole meadow, so that any persons desirous of approaching this mysterious retreat could be seen from afar, while a dark stair led to the top of the rock in a dense thicket, so that anything might be kept concealed from undesirable gaze.

Was this really the architect's intention? Nay, rather the shameless imagination of some brutal slanderer has lent them thoughts never conceived, and has imagined a design derived from iniquity, in a really innocent arrangement. The fact remains that this grotto has been the basis of a thousand atrocities laid to the credit of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, by a regicide party, determined to taint her honour before sending her to the scaffold; and what is still more deplorable, these unworthy tales were repeated, and even propagated by those who should have been the first to refute them. I shall always call to mind that this grotto was shown to me by a noble, deputy to the States-General, who sat among the defenders of the Monarchy, but who made accusations against the Queen, and who even, while defending the throne, tried to make the King ridiculous. So great was the blindness of the French, and so well did they deserve the unhappy fate they experienced for several years.

At the bottom of the garden at Trianon were a number of cottages on the borders of the stream, of



most rustic appearance without, and elegant even—sometimes exquisite—within.

In the midst of this little hamlet a lofty tower, called Marlborough's Tower, commanded the neighbourhood. The exterior stair, bordered with stocks and geraniums, seemed like a garden in the air. One of the huts was a dairy, and the cream contained in China vases, placed on tables of white marble, was kept cool by the brook flowing through the room. Close by was the real farm where the queen had a splendid herd of Swiss cows that grazed in the meadows around.

Near the mansion was a game of roundabout, in a great Chinese pavilion, in which the brightness of the sun's rays was reflected from gold and blue. Three Chinese figures seemed to put the machine in motion, while it was really turned by persons concealed in a cellar.

Trianon is now still more remarkable for the beauty of the foreign trees, which have grown prodigiously, and spread an impenetrable shade. Especially worthy of notice is a fine tulip-tree, a yard in diameter, and a multitude of other rare and valuable trees.

This Trianon was called 'the little' to distinguish it from the Great Trianon, standing very near, and built by Louis XIV. in Italian taste, and after the model of the numerous palaces on the banks of the Brenta. It is composed of a ground-floor alone, with balustrades and statues above it, forming two wings joined by a great peristyle of columns of red and green marble. This mansion was exceedingly

well kept up, although it had been abandoned. I never saw it occupied but twice. The first time the body of the youngest daughter of Louis XVI. was placed there; the second time, it served the quarters of the embassy of Tippoo Sahib.

The gardens were large, and presented no points worthy of note except an amphitheatre of turf, with the busts of the Roman emperors, a fine copy of the Laocoon, by Tuby, and an ancient granite of Minerva.

Louis XIV. had built this mansion from the designs of Mansart to form a termination to the right branch of the canal of Versailles, and to serve as a pendant to the menagerie.

Trianon or Triarnum was a fief owned by the lords of Versailles in 1225. They sold it to the nuns of Saint Geneviève, who yielded it to Louis XIV. in 1663.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE MENAGERIE.

IT is rather in compliance with ancient custom than for pleasure that all sovereigns make collections of strange animals. The Roman emperors and great generals of the Republic brought the most rare animals from the countries they conquered, to adorn their triumphs, and for the combats of the amphitheatre. This sanguinary amusement was long continued by the barbarians; and Pépin, short as he was, cut off a lion's head before his whole court. Charlemagne, his son, changed the bears and tigers for immense sheepfolds, numerous herds, and an immense quantity of poultry, and did not disdain to make a great profit of them. His descendants leaving these rural occupations to their subjects, continued to form collections of the contributions of travellers. In this they followed an ancient custom, and, besides, it was pleasant as well as important to the progress of natural history, to see so many different animals gathered together, to find under one roof the bear of northern regions and the lion of the burning sands of Africa, and be able to study

in one Aviary the ways of so many little birds of various voice and plumage.

The Menagerie of Versailles was a small building on the road to Saint Cyr. The architect Mansart placed it at the end of one of the arms of the canal, as I said before, to match the Great Trianon. In the same place was a large farm ; the tenant occupied all the fields in that part of the park of Versailles, and his fine cattle grazed in company with the deer and roe, and supplied the milk required for the Court.

The house at the Menagerie contained some pleasant rooms, but they became neglected when no longer visited. On the ground-floor was one of those halls of shell-work and rockery that were the ornaments of gardens of old time, and the delight of our ancestors, for by slily turning a tap a quantity of little jets of water were turned on to deluge the inquisitive and amuse the spectators.

The house stood alone, with yards around it, and there roamed the animals, whose nature was gentle enough to permit their being at liberty ; while, in others, were great cages occupied by roaring lions, tigers, and panthers. There was but a small number of animals in the Menagerie, only some tigers, a rhinoceros, some apes, and the beautiful lion brought from the forests of Senegal, with a dog, his companion from birth, and comforter in foreign lands, the same lion who died in the Jardin des Plantes at Paris. The elephant had been long dead. This colossus, which might have walked across the Ganges with ease, was drowned in a little pond while bathing.

The aviary was very pleasant, because, thanks to a little brook that ran through it, all the winged races that chirp among the bushes, and all kinds of marsh and shore waders were united there. The song of the warbler was mingled with' the shrill cry of the sea-gull, while the pheasant from China gravely displayed his golden dress and plume.

I have been told, and confess to ignorance as to the truth of the story, that a keeper of the Menagerie begged of Louis XIV. to grant him the reversion of the place of an elephant who received a number of bottles of wine every day. It is quite evident it was impossible for me to have known this remarkable individual, but I did know just such another in the person of a certain Captain Laroche, porter of the Menagerie.

The Captain might be said to fill the post of the fools of our ancient kings at court, without being quite so clever. From all time humorous persons have served for the entertainment of princes. We find in Saint Simon's Memoirs that a certain Dame Panache was a diversion to the whole Court, carrying off the remains of feasts that they stuffed into her pockets, thrusting in a medley of made dishes, dessert, and roast meat, and teased as much as possible. Captain Laroche bedizened with lace, and loaded with diamonds and rings like a banker, was the dirtiest person to be met with, and never did a boar in his wallow emit such a fetid odour. People vied in teasing the Captain, and his favourite expression, "Say no more about it," was quite the rage at that time, like the most fashionable puns of

the present day. Before the storm of sorrows descended, Louis XVI. used often to amuse himself with Laroche, who was always particular in his attendance at the King's retiring. Then there was a very amusing contest between the pages on duty and the Captain, their object being to pull off his wig and throw it on the canopy of the bed, but the Captain, like a prudent soldier, always had the means of repairing his loss in his pocket. Everyone tried to excell in inventing tricks to tease the unfortunate being, and he was easily consoled by good places and pensions. At last when sorrow had set its mark upon the King, and the Captain had grown more extraordinary in his ways, he was, to his great sorrow and offence, forbidden to enter the King's apartments. I must say to the credit of Louis XVI. that all these jokes were interrupted when the Duke de Villequier, the first gentleman of the chamber was present, as he was connected with M. de Laroche by his second marriage with Mademoiselle de Mazade, a banker's daughter.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF VERSAILLES.

THERE are very pleasant walks in the woods around Versailles. They nearly all grow on hills and are refreshed by springs that glide slowly down to valleys and form little brooks. At sunset the stag came there to quench his thirst, the agile roe bounded on the sloping hills, and the red-eyed pheasant rose noisily from a brake, while the timid partridge proclaimed its love in its sharp call.

It was pleasant sporting in these woods and the plains around, from the quantity of game. It multiplied under the strictest preservation and watchful care; and though the King and his brothers always killed seven or eight hundred head, and sometimes even fifteen hundred, the extent of the park was so great, and the game so plentiful, that no diminution could be observed.

The park of Versailles was surrounded with walls, and more than ten leagues in circumference; it contained several houses. There were no stags in it. To hunt them the King went to the woods of Meudon, or Gouards, to the forest of St. Germain, and in summer to that of Rambouillet.



The royal castle of Rambouillet, seven leagues from Versailles, and on the road from that town, was the place where Francis I. died. It was in a very convenient position for hunting, close to a wood of twenty-five thousand acres. And so, for four months every year, Louis XVI. went thither twice a week, and did not come back till after supper; that is to say, at three o'clock in the morning. The five establishments intended for the propagation of the Spanish race of sheep, called merinos, were still in existence at that time, as well as the farm of Swiss cows, and a magnificent dairy. The fine statue by M. Julien now in the Gallery of the Senate was at the end of this building. A nymph, just going to bathe, is trying the water with her foot, but, fancying she hears a noise, she turns, gathering up her clothing in haste; close by, a goat comes to drink of the brook; and the illusion was the more striking from the group being on the edge of the stream that flowed through the dairy.

Saint-Cyr is on the road to Rambouillet, and half a league from Versailles. The magnificent establishment of Madame de Maintenon is now no longer in existence. A strange chance once led me thither, and I went through the whole of the vast building. This was in 1788, one hundred years from the foundation. The anniversary feasts lasted three days; and all that time the doors of this austere mansion were open to the public; as is well known, none but females could enter at other times, and even they required permission from the superior. When a princess went to Saint-Cyr, she

entered at night, but her attendants waited in one of the exterior courts.

The pupils could only be seen at church at the moment of the elevation of the Host, because the curtains that veiled the railing around them were then drawn back. Going over the whole house on the hundredth anniversary, I saw them at supper in public; and when some fireworks were let off in the gardens, they were taken to the corridor windows, where every one could look at them. The general remark was that their beauty was not properly set off by their dress, which was of the fashion of another century.

Another excursion in the neighbourhood of Versailles was to the village of Jouy, called Jouy in Josas. The Duke de Beuvron was lord of it, and had a beautiful house there, with a fine park. But the great manufactory of M. Oberkampf attracted still more attention, where the stuff known by the name of the cloth of Jouy was made. It was a handsome building, and employed such a number of workmen as to be of great advantage to the country. Every family went to the manufactory to get pieces of cloth, with the outlines of leaves of flowers stamped on them, which they filled in with little brushes; and many women and children were employed in this delicate work.

Near Jouy was the village of Buc; and a very high and splendid aqueduct there that received the water of several springs, and filled the basins of the hill of Montboron at Versailles, also supplying the town.

There were several fishponds round Versailles, some of them very large, such as those of Trappes; the stag at bay would often think to escape his fate by casting himself into them, and come by his death in a way to vary the hunters' pleasure. Pavilions, termed hunting-boxes, were built in several places, where carriages were kept in readiness for the King. They were only two small rooms, with no furniture but straw chairs, so that there should be nothing to tempt the covetous, and a circle of rails to tie the horses to. Each hunting-box had a name; there was one at the base of the hill of Picardy, on the road to Saint-Cloud, at the entrance of the wood of Ville d'Avray.

Ville d'Avray is a little village where M. Thierry, chief valet-de-chambre, had a charming estate; but it was better known from a little spring of such pure and wholesome water that all the Court, and many of the inhabitants of Versailles, made use of it; so several carts always were going to fetch it in great tin bottles, which were laid in ice.

On the other side of the wood of Satory was an ancient open aqueduct, where a kind of hermit had made his retreat. Two little cells had been built by him within the narrow vault; and he had almost lost his sight from the thick smoke that hung within. He cultivated a little garden, and used to come to the town to buy food with the alms he received from visitors.

I will not conduct the reader to all the houses around Versailles, most of them being now in existence, and not recalling any interesting anecdote.

Many were the scenes of obscure intrigues and cabals unknown to the public; others were witnesses to events already gathered up by history. I will leave the history and description of them to any that will be at the pains of writing them.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## FONTAINEBLEAU.

THE ancient Fontainebleau has seen all the kings of the third line in succession range its enclosures, and enjoy its beautiful forest-shade. From the time of Philip Augustus, that is to say, for six hundred years, they have dwelt in its castle, and it has been almost of necessity the scene of the most memorable events of their reigns. The great ones of the earth, and the illustrious personages who came to France at different times, were nearly all received there. Francis the First received the Emperor Charles the Fifth there in 1539, and lodged him in the apartments of Poëles. In our days, the Emperor Napoleon held his first interview with Pope Pius VII. there. It is likely that every sovereign that inhabited Fontainebleau contributed to the irregularity of its construction, by adding a building in conformity with the taste of himself and his century. Indeed, an unfortunate multiplicity of façades and courts of different form and design is to be seen there.

There was only one visit to Fontainebleau during the time I was at Versailles, and that was in the

month of October, 1786. It only lasted till the first of November on account of the accident that befel M. de Tourzel, grand-provost of the hotel, who was run away with by a violent horse, while hunting with the King, and his head was dashed against a pointed branch that penetrated the skull. The wound was so severe that he could not be conveyed to the town, but was laid in the house of a gamekeeper until there was time for the erection in the forest of one of the great huts that were always conveyed after the King. M. de Tourzel survived his accident some days, and the visit was shortened by the general sorrow occasioned by his death almost in the King's presence.

The interest that King Louis XVI. took in the family of M. de Tourzel was increased by this fatal accident, and it, no doubt, was an additional reason for the selection he made some years later of Madame de Tourzel to succeed Madame de Polignac in the important position of governess to the children of France. The selection was completely justified by that lady's good qualities, and equally so by the proofs of attachment she showed to the royal family.

The visits to Fontainebleau took place in the fall of the year, to take advantage of the excellent opportunities for sport in the enormous forest, full of beautiful trees, picturesque positions, and a number of rocks, the more wonderful as they are found in a nearly flat country. These sequestered glades were a great resort of stags and boars. The former could be seen in herds of seventy or eighty.

There was an inexpressible charm in passing through the forest of Fontainebleau towards the decline of day. The great trees that had cast their shade over so many kings waved and whispered in the breeze, and seemed to murmur their ancient recollections. The gigantic masses of rock stood out in the twilight, and the stag passed as quickly as lightning in pursuit of the hind, emitting his hoarse and terrible cry. Sometimes there was risk in meeting him in these moments of frenzy.

All these rocks had different names, and served to mark the hunting meets and the forest roads. There were the rock of Boulogny, the rock of Avon, the rock of Saint-Germain, &c. A hermit had constructed a nice dwelling in this last, and in making his excavation had extracted some kinds of fossils from the rock, and sold them to strangers. The old historians say that the name of the rock came from a monastery founded by King Robert in honour of Saint-Germain, Bishop of Auxerre.

The little hill of Mont Chauvet was still observed with interest; it was used for a goal by good King Henry, when he played at mall, after the fashion of his faithful Béarnais. A great number of crosses, that also had their names, served as sign-posts in this great labyrinth, better known to Louis XVI. than any one.

The great visits of the Court were to Fontainebleau and Compiègne, because nearly all the King's household followed him there, while there were only a small number of persons at Marly, Choisy, or Rambouillet.



At Fontainebleau, the King's lodgings were in the circular part of the court, called that of the Donjon. They were reached from that side, or by the gallery of Francis I., connected with the chapel, and the grand flight of steps of the horse-shoe staircase, in the Court of the White Horse, where the pupils of the military school now are.

The first chamber of the King's apartments was the guard-room, called the Chamber of Saint Louis, as it was declared to have been built and used as a bedchamber of that king; but nothing except the outside walls is left at most. Next was the ante-room, formed out of an old passage, where was arrested Marshal Biron, ungrateful for the kindness of Henry IV. Next to this room was the hall of the nobles, called the *Œil de Bœuf* of Versailles, communicating with the King's bedroom and his other rooms, almost all looking on the garden of the Orangery. The Queen's apartments could be reached from this room, their principal entrance being on the stair leading to the same oval court near the Gallery of the Stags.

I do not remember that these rooms contained anything curious. The furniture was very plain, as the Court only went to Fontainebleau for a short time. And yet I have preserved a recollection of a little dressing-room of the Queen's, furnished in Oriental style, and lighted at night by lamps placed in a chamber separated from the room by a sheet of glass draped with taffety, the colour of which was often varied, giving a soft and pleasantly tinted light.

In the Gallery of the Stags, leading from the oval court to that of the Princes, and so called from its view of the Wood of Stags, Queen Christina of Sweden, in a paroxysm of jealousy, ordered the cruel murder of the Marquis of Monaldeschi, her grand-equerry, after having had him prepared for death by a Mathurin monk. A most extraordinary crime, and against the laws of the realm, as well as contrary to her abdication of power in Sweden. The motive of Queen Christina for this horrible act of vengeance has never been fully ascertained; she lost the protection of Louis XIV. by it. Most probably it was infidelity or indiscretion of the Marquis, who was supposed to be her lover. I have seen a little stone in the gallery, with a cross and sacred monogram engraved on it, which had been placed on the spot where the unfortunate man received his death-blow, for the Queen's emissaries assailed him several times. He was buried the same evening in the church of the village of Avon, and the convent of the Mathurins preserved his sword, his coat of mail, and the narrative of his death, written by Father Lebel, a witness of it.

The oval or donjon court was separated from the court of the fountains, by a great portico surmounted by an open dome under which Louis XIII. was baptised. The anxiety of the people to behold this scion of a beloved king caused Henry IV. to select this place rather than a church. Indeed, the crowd was so great that, as the chronicle relates, the King lost his hat on leaving his apartments at

eleven at night, to order the *Te Deum* to be sung as a thanksgiving for the event.

The Queen often went to Fontainebleau by water. She embarked at Choisy, and ascended the Seine as far as Melun, in a splendid yacht, commodious as a large house, for herself and her attendants, with saloons, kitchens, and a quantity of trees in boxes making a sort of garden in it. I met it once at Corbeil, being taken to Choisy, and that was the only voyage to Fontainebleau that I saw performed by the Court, as they were soon put a stop to for economical reasons.

I never saw Compiègne at that time, the King only went there for a few days to hunt.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## SAINT-GERMAIN AND MARLY.

I OFTEN walked under the darksome vaults of the ancient Castle of Saint-Germain, the cradle of the last line of our kings, the birth-place of Louis XIV., and the dwelling of the sovereigns for five hundred years. The long and narrow galleries, the stairs in the towers, of very easy ascent, presented the characteristics of the architecture of the time of Charles V., the builder of this dwelling in 1370. A few old English ladies might still be met with in these passages, relics of the stay of an unfortunate Court which had yet found respect, help and compassion in its misfortunes.\*

Some families used the Castle of Saint-Germain as a retreat after the Court had abandoned it for the splendours of Versailles, while repairing their fortunes by a wise economy, favoured by the cheapness of provisions. The King's rooms alone remained vacant.

When I visited Saint-Germain, I was sorry to see so many large suites of apartments left to the rats and spiders, without furniture or ornament. The

\* The Stuarts.

friends I went to see in the Castle occupied the Queen's rooms, and those where the Queen of England had died. The guard-room was used as a kitchen, with its splendid marble fire-place, where I saw the turnspit established. The drawing-room had been the Queen's dressing-room. There was still to be seen the same hanging that she herself had arranged, representing all the details of the culture of tea on a Chinese paper. My friend's bed was in the alcove of Anne of Austria. An old picture by Bassan over the chimney-piece had been witness to the birth of Louis the Great. Several small chambers had very strong and elegant iron bars over the windows. They were thus closed on account of the distrust of Louis XIII., thus endeavouring to prevent his queen from receiving any of her favourite advisers in her own rooms. These windows looked on an open gallery, and the two towers of Saint-Denis could be seen from this side of the Castle, and it was said that it was the view of that church which decided the preference of Louis XIV., in favour of the swampy town of Versailles, rather than the fine plateau of Saint-Germain, with its magnificent view. Thoughtful men will not dwell on this report. Louis XIV. never appeared to fear death under any circumstances, besides there is no notion that more readily becomes habitual than the selection and contemplation of a burial-place.

There is more reason for inquiry whether the position of Saint-Germain was more suitable than that of Versailles for the erection of a great palace. It is true that nothing is equal to the view enjoyed

from the top of the terrace in the former place; but, as the castle stands on a hill, it would have been impossible to give it such a fine approach as adorns Versailles, especially on the side towards Paris. The neighbourhood of the Seine would not have been of much advantage to the fountains; a complex hydraulic machine would have always been required to bring water up to the top of the tower.

Another admirable feature of Saint-Germain is the magnificent terrace, two thousand four hundred yards long, that bounds the park on the side towards the Seine, and affords the most splendid view that can be seen, in the multitude of towns and villages visible around Paris, in the fertile land and winding river.

At the end of the terrace was the Castle of Val, the property of Marshal Beauvau, and, before him, of the unfortunate Count de Lally,\* who was so confident of escaping conviction that all preparations were made to receive him at Val on the day of his execution.

Marshal de Noailles, governor of Saint-Germain, had a fine house, with a superb garden, there. Among the numerous buildings to be met with in this garden I may mention a little fort,

\* Lally-Tollendal, the opponent of Lord Clive in India. "After the taking of Pondicherry, the enemies of Lally took advantage of this disaster to accuse him of treason. He appeared before the Parliament of Paris with the conscious bravery of innocence; but after a trial that was a disgrace to the old magistracy, he was condemned to death, and executed with a gag in his mouth. The son of Lally, with the assistance of Voltaire, established the justification of his memory in 1778."—LAVALLÉE, *Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 520.

with its batteries and drawbridge; a model of all Vauban's art of defence.

There was also an oak so large that a well-furnished room had been constructed within it. It may easily be imagined that this monstrous tree was artificial, but it was such a good imitation that I only found it out on measuring the circumference of the tree, when I found the iron clamps of the doorway. A young oak had been so cleverly worked in, that it looked like a large branch above, preserving remains of vegetation.

This family of Noailles still felt the effects of the great patronage of Madame de Maintenon; in my time even, it numbered among its members two marshals of France, blue ribbons; and two captains of the guards, decorated with the Golden Fleece; the value of the benefits conferred upon this house by the King may be reckoned at two millions. It is a pity that some of its members, especially the Prince de Poix, gave occasion for reproach by not having always duly responded to this patronage.

Half way from Saint-Germain to Versailles was the little Castle of Marly, at the bottom of a valley. It is now destroyed, and no doubt this brilliant spot, *adorned by Louis*, will revert to its former tenants, the marsh-birds.

Louis XIV. overcame nature in the building of Marly, and mocked at its common laws. Machines were invented to carry the largest trees, roots and all, so as to have the more speedy enjoyment of them. Work went on day and night; there was an endeavour



to realise and repeat the prodigies of fabulous times. It was necessary to descend a steep hill to reach the castle. At the top were two circular buildings and the stables. The main building of the castle was a great square block, with steps all round it. Louis XIV., faithful to his motto, wished this pavilion to be considered as the palace of the God of Day; and twelve other smaller pavilions placed around the lawn represented the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and were used for lodgings for persons admitted to the honour of visiting Marly, the favour so much desired under the great King. The fresco paintings around the walls of these pavilions were of allegorical subjects bearing on this idea.

In the middle of the grand pavilion was the famous Hall of Marly, so celebrated in all the memoirs of the time of Louis XIV., the meeting-place of all persons admitted to these delightful visits. The Court was in a measure delivered from ceremony, and lived like private persons. The King and princes could be seen at all times; there was more opportunity for flirtation; favours could more easily be asked; excellent motives for anxiety to visit Marly. But many fortunes were impaired by the very high play that went on there. Madame de Maintenon complains of it in her letters, as well as the weariness she often felt in the Hall of Marly; she had often tried to moderate these excesses, but without success; she only domineered over the Princesses and the Court.

Under Louis XVI. Marly was less in favour. Other palaces had been built, and were preferred.

I only remember one visit there, but it made a mark in history.

Louis XVI. was planning a notable blow, and, for greater secrecy, in the preparation for this act of vigour, he retired to Marly on pretext of sorrow for his son. The family accompanied him, and so was secured from the consequences of the famous royal sitting of the twenty-first of June, and the declaration there to be made, putting a stop to the revolutionary intentions of the States-General. This resolution showed the good sense of Louis XVI.; he only required means of carrying it into effect, and men of courage and resolution instead of weak and perfidious counsellors. The third estate, the minority of the nobles and the clergy, saw by this declaration that their designs were abortive. An active opposition was requisite to avoid failure and the ruin of the party; so the resistance was open, conspiracy was laid bare; but the monarch blenched, and France was hurried to destruction.

Not far from Marly was the famous hydraulic machine invented by the Chevalier de Ville, and constructed by Rennequin Sualem. By a combination of wheels, pumps, and a multitude of pipes and aqueducts, it raised the water five hundred feet, to the arcades of Marly, and fed the fountains in the town of Versailles, as well as the basins in the park—the wonder of strangers. Mechanism grows more perfect every day, and would, no doubt, now obtain the same results by less complicated means; but for the time of its construction, in 1682, it was a wonderful work.

Marly was, for a long time, the borough of the first barony of France. The first Christian baron, Matthew de Montmorency, was lord of it in 1204. The forest was one of the pleasantest for hunting, being surrounded with a wall. If the gates were closed, a stag could not escape. So it was there that the King treated the ladies and foreign princes to the pleasure of the chase. Near the forest was a great plain called the Trou d'Enfer, where, every fourth year, the King's horse-guards and body-guards were brought up from their garrisons and reviewed by him.

The gardens of Marly, "where the rain does not wet," in the words of a courtier of Louis XIV., were the work of the genius of Mansart and the pencil of Lebrun. They were full of statues and fountains; at the end of the lawn a great balcony overlooked a horse-pond, and the road to Saint Germain. There were the two fine marble horses made by Guillaume Coustou, which were taken to Paris, and are now at the entrance of the Champs Elysées. All those magic groves are destroyed. In a little time they have disappeared, but the remembrance will live, for they are consecrated in the beautiful verse of the Virgil of France.

. . . Marly as fair as the morn,  
Which Louis, and art, and nature adorn,  
There all is so great that art cannot be shy,  
Armida's own palace of magic is nigh,  
Alcinous' ground—nay rather of one  
Most great in repose, when his labours are done,  
Still seeking to conquer and obstacles tame,  
Making even his rest a marvel for fame,

The soil, and the water, the woods as you saw,  
Are taught in their turn to bend to his law ;  
To his palaces twelve, so beauteously made,  
The trees are compelled to marry their shade.  
The bronzes are breathing, the rivers ascend,  
And in torrents of foam with thunders descend,  
In splendid canals to glide from their fount,  
In sheets they expand, like wheat-sheaves they mount,  
And caught by the sun in his glittering beams,  
They fall in gold, azure, and emerald streams.  
If I wander along in the grove's dark arcades,  
Lo, Sylvens and Fauns have peopled the shades ;  
Diana and Venus have charmed this abode,  
Each grove is a temple, each marble a god,  
And Louis, reposing in victory's embrace,  
Hath invited Olympus his banquet to grace.

*Delille. Les Jardins.*

## MATTERS.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### MINISTERS.

THE changes of Ministers are an indication of the condition of an Empire. When the march of government is untrammelled, the directors remain longer at their post, having no obstacles to surmount.

The last years of the monarchy are a proof of the justice of my assertion. In a very short time such sudden changes took place in the Ministry as to display the perplexities of the chief of the State, and, at the same time, the incapacity of those he summoned to his assistance.

In 1786, the four Ministers were the Marshals de Ségur and de Castries, the Baron de Breteuil, and the Count de Vergennes.

The first had charge of the War department, and had succeeded M. de Montbarey in 1780. While in the army, he had shown great courage, and lost an arm at the battle of Laufeld, where he distinguished

himself. His mind was sharp enough to settle any difficulties in his department, and to rule it well in common times; but his head was not strong enough for seasons of tempest, so he was one of the first to be dismissed when the troubles began to disturb France, and his conduct during the revolution was far from showing a powerful and commanding soul in these times of agitation.

Marshal de Castries took charge of the Marine department in 1780, as successor to M. de Sartines. To place him in this important post was a repetition of the fault already made in depriving M. de Sartines of the direction of the police, to place him over our fleets—for M. de Castries, always an officer of the army, had only visited ports and ships from curiosity, and knew nothing concerning the important charge he undertook.

M. de Vergennes vindicated his master's confidence by the good understanding he maintained with other powers. The treaty of peace in 1783 was due to him; and yet, if a general officer of note in these wars is to be believed, M. de Vergennes, naturally a timid man, had an exaggerated dread of displeasing the Court and the great. He had straightforward sense and a clever mind, and yet had no vigour or genius.\* His Sovereign's friendship was only ended by death; he died in the winter of 1787. As custom forbade that a corpse should lie in the Sovereign's mansion, he had been taken to his little estate in the Avenue de Paris, and all the

\* See Memoirs de Bouillé.

troops went there to accompany his funeral; and after it was over, went to the Court ball. I thought it well to mention this contrast, as a graphic illustration of the manners and customs of the Court, and because I have seen, in a modern work, that all the gaieties were interrupted at the death of M. de Vergennes.

The Baron de Breteuil had all the ability required to hold the post of Minister for Home Affairs for a long time, as great talent was not wanted to govern the business of the King's household, and the management of the kingdom; otherwise the Baron must have sunk under the weight of his duties. Greater vanity was never combined with greater emptiness. I have seen a caricature representing the Minister, and bearing no title but the notes of an air from the opera of *The Magnifico*, the words to which are, "Oh, what a beautiful horse it is!"

The head of the law was Chancellor Maupeou. Banished for several years to his country-seat, he had returned full of hatred to all parliaments, and they never forgave his attempts to reduce their power. The way in which these courts worked their own ruin and the miseries of France, are a justification for the Chancellor's attempts. On his disgrace, the seals were entrusted to Hugh de Miromesnil, a weak, trembling, and sickly old man. The post of Chancellor was permanent in France; the Sovereign could not of his own will deprive any one to whom he had granted it; nothing but a judicial conviction could take it away, and it was a noble



idea to make the law thus respected in its chief, by placing him, in a certain sense, above the caprice of man. The Chancellor, like Themis, must be passionless, and remain aloof from all events. He was always wrapped in his black cloak, never went into mourning, and was always followed by an escort, whether in chair or carriage. None of his actions ought to be concealed; he was a kind of representative symbol of the body he led.

Perhaps no one was more fitted to fill the post of Controller-General of Finances in these troublous times than M. de Calonne. Having great facility in work, and a mind fertile in expedients, he alone could find the means to restore France from its exhaustion, arising more from repeated loans than the prodigality of the Court. There is no reason at all for blaming M. de Calonne for luxury and splendour that seem inseparable from great genius, seldom knowing how to bend to little economical calculations. We repeat, with the wise and judicious Ferrand, that individual actions of a great man may be blamed, but that his conduct must be judged as a whole. Calonne worked day and night indefatigably. His frequent visits to Paris were only courses of business, not interrupted by motion, for his carriage was a working room. When he reached home, he sought, in the fruitful resources of his mind, means to the salvation of France by the light of candles, with the shutters closed, and his feet in a bath. But the pride of the parliament, and tenacity of the clergy, were insurmountable barriers, and his projects were

broken against them, though really philanthropic, for the charges were to press more heavily on great landowners than on the people. Having displayed his capacity in France, M. de Calonne went into Germany, and proved his attachment to the house of Bourbon by sacrificing his fortune, his repose, and his precious collections, for princes who were unthankful to him. I did not know M. de Calonne, nor was I connected with him by any tie, so my opinion is most impartial; and, if a warrant is required for what I state, I might mention that, before his death at Paris, in 1804, Bonaparte had consulted him on several financial matters.

So great a man can seldom see his life repeated in his descendants; as was really the case with M. de Calonne. I knew his son, and he had hardly the sense of an ordinary man.

M. de Calonne was thwarted in his designs for new taxes by the remonstrances and opposition of the parliaments, and thought he could defeat them by assembling the notables of the realm. This caused his own destruction, and that of the monarchy. He was obliged to unfold to them that the deficit in the royal treasury amounted to a hundred and ten millions, without being able to make them understand that this excess of expenditure did not arise so much from the waste of the Court as from the enormous interest paid for the loans contracted by Necker during his first ministry. De Calonne's retirement was the signal for that of several other ministers. The Count de Brienne succeeded to M. de Ségur and M. de la

Luzerne to M. de Castries. On the death of M. de Vergennes, his place had been taken by M. Montmorin, an enlightened but timid politician, whose pusillanimous advice did great injury to the interest of Louis XVI.; but his involuntary faults, and the attachment he exhibited to the constitutional party, at least exteriorly, were effaced by his melancholy death after the 10th of August.

Before his retirement, M. de Calonne had caused the seals to be removed from the custody of M. de Miromesnil, and gave them to M. de Lamoignon, a name of note among the magistracy, but personally a most ardent enemy of the body he belonged to; and this private hatred between the minister and parliaments contributed to bring on the violent action of these bodies. M. de Lamoignon had honest views, and more judicial than administrative knowledge. They hated him especially because he became the confidant and fellow-worker of Cardinal de Brienne. Having been replaced by M. de Barentin, he finished his career on his estate of Basville in a miserable way. His children found him one day in a grotto in the garden, killed by a shot from a gun. The weapon was close to him, but it could never be discovered whether his death was the result of an accident or of despair.

The Court, after making trial of several ministries of ephemeral existence, in its repugnance to the recall of Necker, whom mistaken public opinion summoned to the Ministry, called to its counsels Brienne, Archbishop of Sens, a prelate of ill-fame for morality, who had acquired a certain reputa-

tion as an economist, and besides was a great favourite with the philosophical party. Honours were showered on him. He was soon named chief of the ministry, and decorated with the purple only to soil it by his conduct to the Court of Rome, and his scandalous death. His whole ministerial existence was a series of faults and blunders. He made the King act vigorously sometimes, and then give way soon after. He had cried down Calonne and his projects; but soon found himself very glad to take them up again. At last the parliament, driven to extremity, made its ill-omened appeal to the States-General, and that was the origin of the miseries of France. The various edicts submitted to this court for registration, the royal sitting, the banishment of the first prince of the blood, and the narrative of the mistakes of Brienne belong to the province of history. The Cardinal gave up the Ministry in terror, and went to hide his shame in his property of Brienne. His brother was involved in his retirement, and was replaced by the Marquis of Puységur. The Baron de Breteuil was succeeded by M. Laurent de Villedieu, brother of the celebrated mechanician who contrived a silver arm for a sick man as a substitute for the powers he had lost. M. Barentin was keeper of the seals, and the Court in despair at last decided on the recall of M. Necker.

The Genevese, coming from the obscure business of a bank, concealed immense pride under a simple exterior, as well as impenetrable obstinacy, and astounding vanity, inspired by the eulogiums cease-

lessly showered on him by the party economists. During his first Ministry, he had delayed the ruin of France for a moment by loans that were sure to precipitate the evil a little later. At last he arrived at digging the abyss himself by the feebleness of his financial projects, and especially by his miserable notion of the double representation of the third estate, a project to which he obtained the King's assent against the opinion of his whole council, by the power he had obtained over his mind. A Protestant and a plebeian, Necker was the enemy of the two first orders of the State, and the partisan of the enemies of the throne and religion. Future ages will refuse to believe in the infatuation he inspired, and the worship paid to him for a moment. But when once his name had served for a pretext for the first excesses of the Revolution he fell into disgrace; and after struggling for another year against public opinion, he returned to Switzerland, to his estate of Coppet, to cherish his remorse, which must have been the more bitter, since an ambitious man hates obscurity, and he was condemned to it by the hatred of France.

I witnessed his return to Versailles in the month of July, 1789, after his expulsion. It was more from fear than actual necessity that he was recalled by the King. The Queen always disliked him; the unfortunate lady always had a straightforward mind, and so was never deceived by Necker's mountebank tricks. Returning to Versailles, he wanted to make a triumphal entry into Paris, under pretext of going to thank the Electoral assembly for the interest

shown in him. His progress was really a popular triumph, but that made the re-action the more bitter. In vain he demanded the liberation of his friend and countryman, the Baron de Besenval, under arrest as a conspirator; he could not obtain it. I saw him return, sitting back in his carriage, sad and thoughtful. No doubt he was reflecting on his position, and saw, when too late, that he was only made a tool of to overturn everything, and would perhaps be a victim. France had been set aflame by his dismissal in 1789; his departure in 1790 attracted so little notice that I should find it difficult to fix the exact time, so true it is that the idol of the people's incense rests upon feet of clay, and may be overturned by the slightest shock.

The conduct of Necker towards Louis XVI. was a mass of ingratitude, yet from the retirement of his mountains he dared to raise his voice in the King's defence, and endeavoured to deliver him from the scaffold when he had opened the road to it. Far from having a better estimate than anyone of the upright views and domestic virtues of that Prince, he was the first to rejoice at his misfortunes. Nothing broke the terrible silence of the night of the 5th of October, or interrupted the grief of the King's faithful friends, but the frightful sneers of Necker's daughter, Madame de Staël.\* Madame Necker herself was as much to blame as her husband, though she was a charitable person, and founder of

\* The passionate feelings of the time really represented Madame de Staël thus—all the world is now aware of the perfect injustice of these allegations.



several good works; and the whole family being possessed with a demon of pride and scribbling, she has chosen to give in her writings proofs of her respect for her husband, and agreement with all his notions. Heaven had produced in her body the agitation that perturbed the mind of her husband; for, in consequence of a nervous disorder, she was perpetually in motion. If she sat down a moment she had to yield to the impulse of all her muscles, and rose again to continue her wearisome movement. I have watched her at a play standing in a box with gratings, and in perpetual motion for three hours. Madame Necker, under her maiden name of Curchod, should have married the celebrated historian Gibbon; with her sense and virtue she should have made an excellent mother of a family. Ambition and pride made her the accomplice of her husband.

The insurrection of the fourteenth of July caused a great change in the Ministry. Marshal de Broglie had been War Minister for a short time, and was obliged to fly to Germany to escape the fate that befell his successor, the Marquis de La Tour du Pin Gouvernet, who lost his life on the scaffold, as a recompense for his attachment to his religion and his King. The Marshal's example of flight was followed by Barentin, the keeper of the seals, and by Laurent de Villedeuil. The place of the first was filled by the Archbishop of Bordeaux, Champion de Cicé, a restless and turbulent prelate, the declared enemy of his order and of the King, who had thrown himself into the arms of the third estate, at the



head of the minority of the clergy. M. de Saint-Priest, well known as ambassador to Turkey and to Sweden, took the place of M. de Villedieuil.

I am not going to detail the long list of all the Ministers that passed in rapid succession during the latter part of the reign of Louis XVI., and changed more quickly as the Monarchy inclined to its fall. The King could find no more faithful subjects who would accept the dangerous honour of giving him counsel. Those who offered themselves were his enemies, and tormented him by their treasons. The small number of his friends, still devoted to him, were soon thrown down by the intrigues of the regicide faction, and paid for their fidelity with their heads.

Under the Monarchy, the Ministers had no distinctive marks of their employment. Except on grand occasions, the officers of the Crown did their work in ordinary dress. The King received a Minister, to go through the work of his department, in a room at the first salient angle made by the court of marble with the royal court on the right-hand side; but councils were held in the large chamber next to the grand waiting-room. The interests of France were discussed, and papers were signed on a long table covered with green velvet. Two antique busts placed in this room seemed to preside over the deliberations, and inspire the counsellors of the Monarch. One was of Alexander, in porphyry; the other, of black marble with silver eyes and drapery of white marble, was of Scipio Africanus, and was given to Louis XV., in

1733, by the Abbé Fauvel, a noted collector of curiosities.

Besides the councils that met in this room under the eyes of the King, there was the Council of State, meeting in a hall on the ground-floor of the castle, on the left in the royal court, and presided over by the Chancellor, or keeper of the seals.

## CHAPTER II.

## STATES-GENERAL.

I CANNOT fancy that any Sovereign exists who does not shudder at the very name of Diets and States-General, unless he has the will and power to rule their resolutions, and, if necessary, repress their extravagance by the power of the bayonet.

It was a received principle in our ancient monarchy that the King was Sovereign, and his authority alone made the laws. "So desires the King, so desires the law." The States-General of the kingdom had no means but remonstrance and supplication, and the King deferred to their griefs or prayers, according to the rules of justice and prudence. "For," says the celebrated President de Blancmesnil, "if he were obliged to grant all their demands, he would cease to be King."

Thus Louis XVI. lost his crown, when the States-General proceeded from their grievances to most arrogant language. Ferrand says again:—"The States-General, even the most seditious, never claimed to participate in legislation. They declared what they thought they ought to demand for the good of

the State, or was suggested by the factious and intriguing, who always abounded among them ; they never presented their complaints but on their knees, an attitude which does not consist with the idea of their possessing any notion of sovereignty ; their advice was never asked on any matter but taxation." This was the duty of States-General under the Monarchy ; we know all the arrogant claims they made during the first days of the Revolution. The unhappy Prince who summoned them was far from seeing that, in calling together the chiefs of the nation, he was surrounding himself with rebels and regicides.

I shall not give a history of the Assembly and its frightful struggle between subject and sovereign. A real enthusiasm had arisen in the whole kingdom, and even the Court on its convocation. The opening was impatiently expected ; all the world were in a state of anxiety to be members. But how few there were that entered it with pure and upright intention ! The high clergy were persuaded that the subsidies required of their order, under the name of gratuitous gifts, would be given up. The lower clergy came full of hatred for the bishops. Among the nobles there were as many parties as persons ; those from the provinces desired to put a limit to the favours and graces more abundantly showered on those of the Court ; the latter aimed at a peerage under the pretext of two chambers ; and the peers themselves thought their prerogatives too confined. The third estate cherished in their bosom a hatred of the privileges

of the other ranks, a spirit of religion, of disturbance and anarchy, that has proved itself in blood. In a word, all these deputies who ought to have met with one single aim, to second the noble projects of the righteous King, only contributed their concealed hatred, a miserable party spirit, and all the evil passions that can take root in the heart of man.

At last came the fourth of May, a day that should have been the dawn of the happiness of France, but only proclaimed the downfall of its ancient monarchy. All the deputies arrived at Versailles in a mass. From the first of May, the heralds-at-arms wearing their tabards of blue velvet, with golden fleurs-de-lis, riding splendid white horses, followed by soldiers and all the trumpets of the great stable, had been proclaiming the opening of the States-General in the streets of Versailles. It rained hard on the evening of the third; the King, while going to bed, kept on watching the weather, and gave orders for carpets to be laid for the procession if it stopped raining by five in the morning. The next day was fine enough. The streets had been full from early morning. Windows had been hired at a very great price, and were full of spectators from all parts. The deputies went to the church of Notre-Dame, and there awaited the Court in full parade and great ceremony.

The King was in his two horse carriage, with all his family, followed by twelve or fifteen other carriages full of ladies and the great officers of the Court, the horses in splendid harness, with lofty plumes on their heads. All the King's household,

the equerries, the pages on horseback, the falconers with their hawks on arm, led the superb company. When they reached Notre-Dame, the procession commenced between two ranks of soldiers, and a multitude, already imbued with the spirit of rebellion, cheering at the sight of the third estate, and especially of the Count de Mirabeau, a deputy of this rank, conspicuous from his frightful face and monstrous head, which he pretended to carry with even more arrogance than usual. Applause ceased at sight of the nobles, but was renewed with more enthusiasm at the passing of the Duke of Orleans, who had taken post amid the deputies of his bailiwick, disdaining his place as Prince of the blood. The acclamations ceased again at the approach of the clergy. The crowd hardly paid any marks of affection to the King himself, so far had their spirit of revolution extended.

The third estate headed the march, dressed in black, with the short cloaks and bands in use among lawyers. Their pride seemed abased by this plain dress, contrasting with the coats of the nobles, which though also black, were relieved by facings of cloth of gold on coat and cloak, and hats with feathers.

After this order came the curés ; but those who were most remarkable among them, had usually forgotten the gentle duties of their ministry of peace, to come to Versailles with a spirit of intrigue and most perverse intentions. The bishops followed in rochet and cope, and last of this noble company came a prelate still more respected for his age and

virtue than for the Roman purple he wore alone. It was Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, Archbishop of Rouen.

After the deputies came the parish clergy, preceding the Archbishop of Paris, carrying the Host under a sumptuous canopy, supported at the corners by the King's brothers and his nephews, the Dukes d'Angoulême and de Berri.

It had been considered whether the King should have a canopy, but he refused it in his piety, desiring no distinction before God, from whom he hoped for aid to endure the sorrows of his reign. He only carried a taper behind the Host. His coat and cloak were of cloth of gold, and his jewels shone most brilliantly. By his side walked the Queen, in an equally splendid dress; her majestic bearing was enhanced by a head-dress adorned with the flowers known as crown imperial. The Princes and all the Court followed the royal family in their utmost splendour.

This ever celebrated procession passed before the little stable, where on a balcony, at the point of death, lay the heir-apparent of the throne, on a heap of cushions. He was a true symbol of the monarchy, as it already had one foot in the grave like him. This fair and precocious infant, in the midst of his pain, sometimes gave a smile at the sight of his fond mother and father, while their eyes filled with tears at sight of the sufferings of their child. Alas! had the future been unveiled before thee, unhappy Prince, instead of weeping, thou wouldst have knelt in thanks to that God



whom thou didst follow so faithfully, for calling this precious scion to Himself, and thus removing him from the sorrows awaiting his family and the tortures of the prison of the Temple.

The church of Saint-Louis was reached, and Mass was sung there. The Bishop of Nancy, Abbé de la Fare, preached a sermon full of eloquent passages and oratorical display. It was monstrous that the Assembly showed their satisfaction by clapping of hands, always before reserved for exhibitions in a theatre. This disrespect to God was the first stroke of the axe upon the altar, and the signal for the destruction of worship.

On the fifth, took place the opening of the States-General. The hall for their sittings had been built in the Avenue de Paris, in the Hôtel of the Menus Plaisirs, where the Notables had already sat. This hall was afterwards to be used for the deliberations of the third estate, and was lighted from the top. There was a row of columns all round, bearing a gallery and tribunes for spectators. The throne was raised at the end, under an enormous canopy of blue velvet, with golden fleurs-de-lis. The Ministers' desk was at the bottom of the steps, and opposite were the places intended for the third estate; the two other orders being placed at the sides of the great square room.

On the fifth, the deputies arrived by the entrance from the Rue des Chantiers, and took their places, not without some agitation, caused by the spirit of jealousy of the third estate, and by the sudden death of one of the members from an apoplectic stroke.

The Court soon arrived by the Avenue de Paris, having left the castle with the same parade as the day before. The King appeared on the throne, surrounded by his family, and all the splendour of royalty. While the officers of the Crown took their places, the King, perceiving the Duke of Orleans among the deputies, sent a message to desire him not to keep apart from his family ; but the turbulent Prince persisted in his own course. When the disturbance caused by the King's arrival had ceased, the King rose, as well as the whole meeting. He invited the Queen to be seated by a sign, and she refused with a low bow. There was a solemn silence in the hall. Louis XVI., who had a noble and majestic bearing, especially when not walking, splendidly dressed and glittering with jewels, towered over this famous assembly from the elevation of his throne ; and as if all the pomp of earth were not sufficient to inspire respect and reverence, the heavens seemed desirous of contributing. At the instant of the King's opening his speech, a ray of light pierced the silk that veiled the opening in the roof, and shone upon his majestic forehead. This circumstance stirred up a profound feeling of veneration in all noble minds, and ought to have arrested the evil designs already under contemplation by the wicked. The King's discourse was concluded amid the sound of the most lively acclamations, that none dared to refuse to him. Barentin, at this moment the keeper of the seals, clad in the purple gown, slowly mounted the steps of the throne to receive the orders of the Sovereign. The King

seated himself, and all the Assembly followed his example, and the nobles, according to privilege, put on their hats—the collection of all these plumes presenting a unique appearance. The keeper of the seals having announced the King's intentions, M. Necker, always guided by the genius of pride, produced an enormous paper from his pocket, and was not ashamed, on this day devoted to State ceremony, to take up the time of the Assembly for an hour and a half, with himself, his conduct, and his plans. As nature had not gifted him with a clear and sonorous voice, he handed his memorial to a physician of the name of Broussonet, who, for the space of an hour, wearied the Assembly with a lecture more adapted for a bed of justice than so solemn a day.

As I do not mean to write the history of the States-General of 1789, I shall not follow them in their innovations and rebellions. Their destructiveness continued up to the royal sitting of the 21st of June. The King's most faithful servants were never weary of going to the hall of the third estate, the only one large enough to allow of the presence of the public to listen to the motions and speeches of the most celebrated orators. All admired the vehemence of Mirabeau and eloquence of Barnave; all the pamphlets that each day hatched were snatched up. The very servants devoured them at the house-doors, and these frightful papers, more or less openly, preached impiety, disobedience to law, and scorn of the royal authority. No eyes began to open till the fourteenth day of July; even

many persons continued in their blindness till the massacres of the fifth and sixth of October. The royal sitting on the twenty-third of June was the last effort of expiring monarchy. It was only an opportunity for the factions to throw off the mask and display their projects of anarchy. Severity should have been displayed, but, instead of a Richelieu, Louis XVI. had none but a coward and treacherous minister to look to. He blenched, and from that moment saw he was dethroned. The union of the three orders took place because the nobility feared for the King's life, and the King for the blood of the nobles. No one listened to the profoundly wise advice of M. de Cazales: "Let the King perish, but save the Monarchy." The King caused the nobility to be desired through their president, the Duke of Luxembourg, to unite with the two other orders; he joined to the order a request, that is always so powerful over the heart of French nobles, and the union took place. The third estate was more numerous than the two other orders, and was still further increased by the great number of clergy who had taken post in its ranks; it had a majority in every debate. This was the consummation of the revolution. With a few soldiers, a very little energy would have been requisite to dissolve these States-General, but there was none, and faction had every opportunity to get the upper hand.

Though I was present at the most famous sittings of the States-General, I shall not give an account of them, and will only mention one event

connected with these States, that is to say, the sitting of the sixteenth of July, when the King, freeing himself from the apparatus of the throne, went to give an open explanation amid the representatives of the people. What was our surprise when at noon, coming from mass, we saw that the King did not enter the great apartments, but descended the chapel-stairs, crossed the Court, and walking with his ordinary attendants to the hall of the States, made the beautiful speech that historians will be eager to transmit to posterity. Our return was more brilliant; the whole Assembly, in a moment of enthusiasm, followed the steps of the King, of the unhappy prince who came in confidence to claim from the very rebels, not his power, but the happiness of his subjects. They returned to the chapel, and chanted the *Te Deum* there. It could hardly contain all who hurried after the monarch, pouring blessings on him. Certainly, those were much to blame who did not on that day lay down their hatred, their plots, and homicidal projects at the foot of the altar.


The distinction of dress was abolished when that of orders and titles was entirely done away. Each member was at liberty to arrange his dress as he pleased, and this was sometimes done with disgusting cynicism. One deputy alone refused to submit to the decision of the Assembly upon dress, and only added the short black cloak of the third estate to his coarse clothing. He was a peasant from the south of Brittany, a farmer near Hennebon, named Gérard. He was a very good man at heart,

much surprised to find himself there, and to have twenty-five louis to spend a month. He threw himself into the democratic party because he thought it delightful to be able to kill his lord's pigeons and rabbits when they came to eat his corn.

It is seldom that there are not some madmen and some characters in an assembly of so large a number. The Baron de Lupé, deputy of the seneschal's borough of Auch, showed to what lengths obstinacy could go. He was a little bilious man, less than five feet high, and was the only one of all the nobles who refused to unite with the third estate. When this union had taken place, he none the less continued to go every day and take his seat alone, for several hours, on the benches of the nobility, and when the place was closed he walked in the corridor, and never chose to put his foot inside the assembly-room; and not till after the departure of the deputies for Paris did he abandon his post and return to his constituents to give an account of how perfectly he had performed his duties as a gentleman. This notion was ridiculous as an isolated fact; but if all the members of the nobility had shared the feelings of their colleague, events might have taken another direction.

I often went to dine at a meeting of Members of the Right, where the most famous supporters of the party were to be found: the Abbé Maury, Foucault, Cazales, Guilhermy, Montlosier, and the witty Viscount de Mirabeau, surnamed with good reason Mirabeau-Tonneau. In reality, there never was a man more conspicuous for his obesity. I after-

wards saw him in the full uniform of the regiment he raised on the Rhine; that is to say, in a black hussar dress, with a thick beard and moustache. He was the most absurd figure imaginable, and worthy of the pencil of Callot. He was justly accused of not always appearing sober at the evening sittings. In fact, he consumed a large quantity of spirits with his dinner, and this brought him early to the grave. Without having the ability or eloquence of his brother, whom he greatly despised, he was not without culture, but his talents took the line of pleasantry, and nothing more curious than his conversation could be found.





## CHAPTER III.

## THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY.

HEAVEN, in wrath against France, seemed to have marked this date of blood by a fearful storm that happened just a year before. On Sunday, the 13th of July, 1788, the King, on his return from sleeping at Rambouillet, was assailed by such a terrible hailstorm as hardly ever occurs. The whole company were obliged to take refuge under some cart-sheds in the village of Trappes, but were not quick enough to save several riders from being hurt. The country was covered with uprooted trees and dead bodies of birds and game. I will not mention the weight of several of the pieces of ice that were picked up long after the storm; it would, probably, not be believed. The harvest was spoiled; but all these misfortunes put together could not compare with what God reserved for us in his anger. It was from earth itself he chose to select the instruments of his vengeance.

The events that led up to the famous day of the fourteenth of July are well known; as also the means at the disposal of the Court for the repression of the excesses of the States-General and

disturbances of the people. Versailles was full of troops as yet of unshaken fidelity. The regiments of Bouillon and Nassau held the roads to the Orangery; our riding-schools were full of Swiss troops; hussars were bivouacked in the stable-yards; at Paris, at Saint-Denis, all around were considerable forces with the same pervading spirit. It was only to give the word, the rebels would have been dispersed at once and the revolt put down; but the perfidious advisers of the unhappy King, far from stimulating him to such resolution, drew pictures of France bathed in the blood of her children, and a prey to all the horrors of civil war. Instead of displaying their beloved monarch before the eyes of these brave and faithful soldiers, they kept him shut up in his palace, and even the officers were denied access.

Every evening there was a large company at the Orangery; the sounds of military music, the perfume of orange-blossoms, smelling the more fragrant in the quiet of a fine summer evening, in short this contrast of a camp in the midst of a palace was a great attraction to spectators. One evening I saw the Marshal de Broglie there with his family. He had just been appointed general of all these forces. The enthusiasm excited by the presence of the old warrior left no doubt as what would have been produced by that of the King himself. But he was expected in vain, and these brave men departed without having seen their king. It might be said that their fidelity was shaken thenceforward by the species of contempt that seemed to be shown to them. I do not

blame Louis XVI., but I ascribe these mistakes to all those about him, who abused his confidence through their knowledge of his mind, and caused his fall by confirming his fears of making his people unhappy and shedding the blood of his subjects. This is the explanation of the fact that the King who made this sublime speech, equal to the most affecting ones of ancient days, saying that being told that his people loved him was a consolation for his sufferings, could have been dragged to the scaffold by this same people.

On the fourteenth of July, Louis XVI. had come to the resolution of dismissing Necker from the Ministry, but this wise and prudent measure required to be supported by energetic proceedings, and, if need were, by the bayonet. It must be said Necker acted wisely. He was sure of the disturbance that would break out on his departure; so he got into his carriage without any preparation and went to Brussels. The report of his disgrace only became public on Sunday the 12th. That day I was taking a worthy man from my own neighbourhood to the King's dinner. He was an excessive partisan of Necker and reform, a mistake he soon recovered from, and expiated by an imprisonment of seventeen months during the Reign of Terror. He told me that he saw the Queen's satisfaction at the dismissal of the Minister in her face. I do not know, but it seems to me that she was too clever not to be anxious instead of satisfied with a half measure that might produce misfortune. Indeed that evening they learnt the insurrection of Paris. But few persons dared to return thither. On Tuesday at the

sound of the guns of the Bastille, and the cries of the murdered victims, all the troops got under arms, and remained drawn up on the general parade. But the King, yielding to the demand of the States, sent them away during the night. The French Guards soon imitated the cowardly behaviour of their comrades of Paris; they deserted their posts, and were replaced by some National Guards of picturesque and ridiculous appearance.

If the King gave a proof of his love for the public peace and welfare by going to the States on the 16th, he gave a still greater one of courage and coolness on the 17th by giving himself up to the Parisians. He afterwards gave greater ones, but it may be said that they were above humanity. The journey to Paris was a snare set for the unhappy King by the Orleans faction. They hoped that, if he was brought into Paris without guards, through the raging populace, excited by the success of the day before, he would never return alive. The Count d'Artois had gone away with the greatest secrecy; Monsieur was frightened away; thus the throne would be left to the odious Philip, who never considered the Dauphin, in his feeble health and tender years, as an obstacle to his designs. The least thing that the Court dreaded was to see the King a prisoner in Paris; they chiefly feared for his life. He himself only went after feeling all the agonies of doubt. Going to the levée, early in the morning, I saw him through a window opposite to that of his chamber, walking between the Marshal Duras and Duke de Villequier, in great agitation.

His gesture showed the agitation of his mind. Though these two confidants were not capable of giving salutary advice to the King, their hearts really were his, and Louis XVI. never had more sincere friends. At last, after having embraced his weeping family, who thought they should never see him again, the King got into his carriage, accompanied by the Duke de Villequier, the Marshal Beauvau, and the Count d'Estaing, Commander of the National Guard at Versailles.

They set out amid a crowd of people who had for two days borne any arms they could lay hold of. The National Assembly sent a numerous deputation, as a protection for the King, composed of its most factious members, and more calculated to bring danger on his unfortunate head than to ward it off. It is really a fact that he was fired on, and that Providence averted the blow; the shot came from behind the King's carriage, and struck a woman who came out of curiosity.

On reaching the Hôtel de Ville, the King passed under a canopy of swords, and the Mayor of Paris, the astronomer Bailly, knew no better than to show his total opposition to royalty by offering the King a national cockade. At least, no attempt at detention was made. Louis XVI., as soon as he felt sure he could go back to Versailles that night, sent a page of the great stable, M. de Lastours, to inform the Queen. Her tears and transports bore witness to the alarm she had experienced.

Louis XVI. returned about nine o'clock. He was worn out with fatigue, and went to bed imme-

diately. There was no ceremonial; so I cannot say if it was true, as stated by several historians, that his body-servants, in undressing him, saw a rather severe wound on his arm, made by the blow of a sword, that might have been given by accident or by some guilty hand. I am the less inclined to believe this story, for I stayed two years longer at Court and never heard it mentioned. It was only by reading some accounts a long time afterwards that I heard of this circumstance, which it would have been difficult to keep concealed.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE FIFTH OF OCTOBER.

AMONG all the sanguinary horrors of our Revolution, there are none that caused more terror, or affected the friends of monarchy and order more than the excesses of the fifth of October. The various murders that had already taken place had been directed against magistrates, who are always in the greatest danger in times of disturbance. But this time the King's person was threatened, as well as the rest of his family. The stain of blood was not confined to the public squares, but reached the steps of the throne; and the result of this horrible day was that royalty was enslaved, forced to work at undermining its own foundation, and compassing its destruction with its own hands, if not destroyed outright. The chiefs of the Revolution, or rather one of the parties that were acting in unison to overturn the throne, and only differed in their ulterior aims, had long looked askance upon the King at Versailles. The King might at any moment escape them, and the Orleanists did not think their work sufficiently advanced, or France sufficiently corrupted, to expect that the



appointment of their chief to the Regency would not give rise to disturbances in the provinces. The foolish La Fayette, who hugged himself with delight at the notion of a General-Lieutenancy and a protectorate, wished to have his victim at Paris, and both parties thought that the more popular commotions there were, the more would the King's life be in peril. A pretext was wanting for raising another insurrection that should place the King in fetters or in the grave; and it was soon found.

D'Orleans began still more to restrict the delivery of corn from the immense stores he had amassed. Famine is the most infallible method of causing disturbance in Paris, so government has always attended to maintaining the supplies in that great city. The desertion of the French Guards had necessitated the formation of another garrison for all duties outside the palace. The regiment of Flanders was brought from the north. I do not know who made this selection or caused it, but it was unfortunate; for, if the regiment was animated by a good spirit, the colonel was sold to the Orleanist party, and figured on the left of the Assembly, where, as is well known, sat the enemies of Monarchy. This was the Count de Lusignan, claiming the honour of descent from the Kings of Jerusalem, and at Court receiving the distinction due to this origin, while the real scions of this ancient race lived in obscurity in our southern provinces, or vegetated in the inferior ranks of the army.

The strict discipline maintained in this regiment

by the Count de Valfons, the Lieutenant-Colonel, was soon destroyed by higher orders. Provisions were prodigally given by the municipality. Money was distributed in the barracks by strangers, and loose women from Paris swarmed there. The same soldiers who on their arrival had received the proposition made to them by a municipal to assume the national cockade with shouts of Long live the King, were soon sold to the party of anarchy. It was rare for different bodies of the army to meet without the exchange of banquets, when the bonds of fraternity between the warriors were enhanced by intercourse, and thus the whole army was made one family. The body-guards wished to entertain the garrison of Versailles at a banquet as usual; the opportunity was seized for making them odious to the people by spreading a report that they had, in the presence of the King, trodden the tricolour cockade under foot, and sworn the most *incivic* oaths in an orgie.

The King allowed this entertainment to take place in the great theatre on Thursday the 1st of October. All the town took their seats in the boxes to see this meeting of deputations from all the troops in garrison at Versailles, and to enjoy the sight of all these men of war giving themselves up to simple pleasures, enhanced by the sounds of a good military band and the magnificence of the place, which was brilliantly lighted up.

On his return from hunting, the King, wishing to be witness to this banquet, caused the members of his family to be summoned and went to the

theatre. The presence of the King and his august family excited the joy and enthusiasm that the French have always felt at the sight of their sovereign. Having walked round the tables and saluted the guests, the King returned to his rooms, followed by all who were in the hall. When there, he went out on the balcony over the court of marble, to take leave of the crowd assembled under his windows. The soldiers, stirred up by the music, climbed the balcony with shouts of "Long live the King," and in this strange manner again paid their devoted homage to their sovereign. When the King retired everyone departed, and by nine o'clock everything was quiet in the castle-yards. This was the event on which so many calumnies were based at Paris and the Palais Royal, that focus of all insurrection as well as haunt of vice. Excitement became warmer; it was proposed to go to Versailles to drive away the body-guard, which still wore the white cockade and despised the nation; and the National guard of Paris, with General La Fayette in company, arrived at Versailles.

This event is too much mixed up with the hateful actions of the Duke of Orleans for his historian, Montjoye, one of the most truthful authors of our time, to omit giving it an important place in his work. So reference can be made to it for all the details; I vouch for the truth of almost all. For myself I will only relate those I saw without entering upon a discussion on all that took place.

On the 5th the King was hunting on the other side of Meudon, and was only informed of what was

going on after the arrival of a detachment of women in the Avenue de Paris. He was very anxious about his family, and fearing he could only reach the Palace by making a very long circuit, he came back at such a speed that he galloped down one of the steepest rides in the forest of Meudon. The women in the Avenue were taken by surprise by his speedy passage and let him pass. But a page, M. de Lastours, sent to reconnoitre on the road to Sèvres, was stopped by them on his return, and only owed his liberty to a diversion effected by some body-guards who were on the way to their stables.

All the hordes of the suburbs of Paris arrived in succession. The weather was moist and rainy, there was general uneasiness and consternation in all hearts. Some officious persons had wished, in case of need, to bring out the King's carriages by the gate of the Orangery, and the Queen's by the Dragon gate, but the National Guard of Versailles, the most rebellious in the kingdom, though entirely composed of the King's servants, would not allow it. This was one of the heads of the capital accusation of the unhappy Favras.

Towards nine at night an extraordinary noise in the Rue de l'Orangerie, where we lived, made us run to the windows. It was the column of the body-guard making the best of their way to the Court of the Ministers by the Rue de la Surintendance, deserting the Place d'Armes, where they were in great danger from the number of shots proceeding from the National Guard of Versailles.

About ten o'clock I went to the Castle where I was

on duty. All that part of the town was quiet; the only break in the silence of the streets was from the occasional shouts of the bandits assembled in the Place d'Armes. I found the body-guard drawn up in the gardens under the Queen's windows. The post in the Court of the Ministers had become too dangerous; and the King soon sent them orders to go to Rambouillet. There were only about a hundred and fifty faithful guards left for the defence of the King's Palace, all the other troops had sold their honour.

The *Œil de Bœuf* was filled with a crowd of persons brought by hundreds of different motives, and bearing in their countenances marks of the feelings that animated them.

At last, at eleven o'clock, appeared General La Fayette with a smile on his lips and treachery in his heart. He entered the King's room, and in a conversation that lasted half-an-hour, he persuaded the King, or rather thought he had persuaded the King by his assurances, that he must be in perfect safety, and he came and repeated his crafty promises to the persons assembled in the antichamber. The King dismissed his attendants in hope of saving some from destruction. All retired, and with uneasy minds awaited the conclusion of this night, which came in a horrible awakening to the bitter cry of a threatened queen, to the death groans of the murdered guard and the shouts of the assassins.

The King, had he chosen, might still have escaped in the silence and darkness of the night.

The body-guards would have escorted him on the journey; the nearest castles furnished the necessary carriages and horses. In truth the dangers of a flight were great; the misfortunes that might thence have arisen to Versailles incalculable; but how could they enter into comparison with those that threatened the royal family in their palace? If the King ever conceived this idea, the timid Montmorin and traitorous Necker soon made him abandon it.

The events of this horrible night were seen by very few persons. La Fayette slept the sleep of the tiger; he shut his eyes while watching his prey; and the Count d'Estaing, forgetful of the conquest of Granada, the glory of his ancestors, and his coat-of-arms, that should have called it to mind, thought he would escape the blame of the weaker party by remaining in bed, and waited for the victory of the stronger to declare himself.

What a frightful awakening for the inhabitants of Versailles when, after a disturbed night, the dawn showed them the streets overrun with brigands, furnished with various strange weapons stolen from the shops of Paris! Almost all carrying fragments of flesh on their pikes, they marched after a kind of brutal monster, with his long beard and axe both stained with blood, and dragging behind him the heads of the body-guards murdered that night. Towards daybreak the bandits, who had spent the night in the Place d'Armes, and in the Court of the Ministers, made their way into the little Court of the Princes, the gate having been left open by un-



pardonable if not guilty negligence; and thence into the royal court by the passage under the little peristyle to the right. A body-guard was on sentry at the gate. In a moment they threw themselves on him, murdered him, and put his head on the point of a pike. The poor man's name was Deshuttés; he was of advanced age, and father of a large family. The gate was soon broken, and gave admission to this multitude of murderers, led by men well acquainted with the place, and by the Duke of Orleans himself. They ascended the marble staircase, entered the Queen's guard-room on the right, shouting out the vilest abuse of the Princess, and crying loudly for her head. The guards escaped into the great hall with wounds and blows. Varicourt, the brother of Madame de Villette, the famous Belle et Bonne of Voltaire, was seized, led to the man with the long beard, and his head soon joined that of Deshuttés. Durepaire and Miomandre de Sainte Marie, having given the alarm by their shouts, made time for barricading the door by their vigorous resistance. Miomandre received a blow on the head from the butt of a gun; the cock penetrated the skull, and his head would have been added to the bloody trophies of the morning had not several of his comrades, who had taken refuge in the great hall, and returned to escape another band of brigands who had come up the Prince's staircase, given him assistance, and opened a way to the other hall, leading to the King's apartments.

The Queen, who had been obliged by fatigue and anxiety to take some repose, was awakened by



the cries of the slaughtered guard. She was too much frightened to put on more than a light garment, and fly to her husband. Marquand, servant of the wardrobe, on duty with the King, heard a hasty knocking at a little door at the end of the *Œil de Bœuf*; he ran to open it, and was astonished to see his Queen, half dressed, flying from the blows of the assassins. At the same moment the King, anxious for his wife, reached the Queen's rooms by a secret communication between the apartments.

It was said at the time that the monsters reached the Queen's bed, and in their rage at not finding her in it, pierced the mattress with bayonet thrusts. But this is false; they did not get beyond the guard-room. The struggle then gave time to secure the door. I myself examined the Queen's bed two days afterwards, without finding any marks of violence on it. It may be noted that the body-guards within the castle had not their arms loaded, and so had nothing but their swords as a protection against the brigands; and that the doors would soon have been broken open if General La Fayette had not at last awakened, and coming in with the paid guard of Paris, really saved the royal family by driving out these cannibals. M. de La Fayette did not desire the death of Louis XVI., as it might have placed the crown on the head of the Duke of Orleans, who had quarrelled with him; but he wished to drag the King to Paris, that he might be master and director of events. This foolish general, thinking himself another Cromwell, did not even

know that in all revolutions the people only worship their idols in order to break them afterwards; and this famous hero was thrust into a dungeon even before his victim.

La Fayette, thinking that the King was sufficiently frightened by this fearful awakening, and by the perils endured by a beloved wife and family, caused the massacre to cease, and made his satellites demand that the King should go to Paris. The King gathered his family together, and his council, and desired to surround himself with the National Assembly; "but," said Mirabeau, "it was too undignified for them to go and hold their deliberations in the palace of a king." The unfortunate Monarch, left to himself, in the midst of traitors, and still more terrified by the howls of the murderers, was obliged to give himself up to his enemies. At ten o'clock he came out on the balcony, and himself proclaimed to the crowd of brigands his intention of going to Paris. What a promise! It may be said to have been made over a corpse, for one of the brigands had been killed by a shot from another, and they were such savages as not to allow the removal of this hideous object, causing it to remain before the eyes of the royal family the whole morning.

When the King retired there were tumultuous shouts for the Queen. She made her appearance between her two children, not to throw herself into the arms of her people, as her mother had done, but to offer herself to their fury. A thousand voices were at once raised with this sinister cry, "No

children !” The Queen went in, laid them on their father’s breast, and, in spite of the prayers of the Court and the tears of her family, she went out again on the balcony. What a moment ! All expected to hear the murderous shot ; but this time her courage and noble countenance disarmed these tigers thirsting for blood. At last, about one o’clock, the King, having hastily emptied his desks and packed his papers, rejoined his family and began that sorrowful journey, that long agony, the prelude to the misfortunes to come.

The Royal Family descended by the still blood-stained steps of the marble staircase, and occupied a carriage, followed by the remains of the guard without their arms, escorted by all the bandits and all the furies thrown out by the suburbs of Paris. To the shame of General La Fayette, who might have kept him off, the monster with the long beard was always close by, covered with blood, and hung round with the heads he had cut off ; and, what posterity will hardly believe, the company halted at Sèvres while hairdressers, with daggers at their throats, were compelled to dress and powder these livid and bloody heads. Woe to the carriages that were met on the road ! These trophies were held up at the windows till money was given for their removal. The procession crossed the Place d’Armes ; some furies were there round a great fire, devouring the remains of some horses killed the day before. The National Assembly took post in the Avenue de Paris, to see this army of rebels pass, dragging their victims. The greater part of the deputies were able

to enjoy their work; others deplored their pride and folly. At last, after a painful journey of six or seven hours, after listening to the verbose and insolent harangue of the Mayor of Paris at the Hôtel de Ville, the Royal Family, exhausted with fatigue and deluged with affronts, reached the ancient dwelling of the Valois, and could only just find absolute necessities at the Tuileries.

A few days after the fifth of October I went to the Castle of Versailles, to examine the injuries done on that day. I only saw some guard-room doors broken and locks torn off, but the rest of the apartments had not suffered any damage. I then found a little door left open in the disturbance of such a departure, and went through all the little passages, and a multitude of little rooms whose existence I had never suspected.

I returned to Versailles after an absence of several years, and was shown the mark of a bloody hand on the stone balustrade of one of the windows of the great apartments looking towards the garden on the north, stated to be that of a body-guard who had made his escape from the massacres of that day by flight. It is clear that this was an accidental mark, or had been intentionally made by some person, for the castle was not attacked from that side, and if any body-guards had been there they would not have run any risk, and those from the other apartments, if they had once reached these, could have escaped by the aisle of the chapel and the numerous subterranean passages leading to the theatre, without being obliged to leap from the window of a

high story. The body-guards lost very few on that day; MM. Deshuttés and de Varicourt were the only ones killed. The registers of deaths in the parish of Versailles show that only these two were buried. M. de Savonnières, an officer of the guards, was struck by a shot from the ranks of the National Guard of Versailles about nine o'clock in the evening, when the troop was drawn up before the railing, and he died six months afterwards from the consequences of the wound, which broke his arm. The others who were wounded gradually recovered. I saw them all again at Coblenz, and, without wishing to extenuate the horrors of that day, or the bravery and fidelity of the guards, it must be conceded that the carnage was not so very great. It is of importance to history that private memoirs should always be written with truth.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE COURT AT PARIS.

AND so on the sixth of October, at ten in the morning, Louis XVI., with forty thousand men, and twenty pieces of cannon before him, having seen his guard dispersed or murdered, consented to go that very day to inhabit a palace that had been abandoned for more than a century.

At ten o'clock at night the Court reached this prison, dignified with the name of palace. Some idea may be formed of the possibility of preparing these vast chambers in a few hours; they had never even been warmed since Louis XV. was an infant, and the windows were still filled with the little lead-work lattice of the times of the Medici. With the exception of some rooms which the Queen had caused to be furnished for sleeping in when she went to the play at Paris, the whole was in a fearfully dilapidated condition. Thus the unfortunate family, covered with outrage and insult, came at a rainy and inclement season, after a painful journey, full of the worst apprehensions, to take a moment's repose in these enormous rooms, destitute even of the little comforts to be found in the house of any person of the middle

classes. There were hardly beds there, and if the royal family had not fed on their tears and grief that day, they would have found but little sustenance.

The first three days were nothing but a series of disturbances and difficulties. All who had followed the King, rather from their own zeal than by any orders, lay down the first night on tables or benches in the ante-chambers. The King spent these first days at Paris in comforting his children, and yielding to the cries of a lawless populace occupying the courts of the Tuileries, continually calling the royal family to the windows, and compelling them to comply with their desire. Things were got into order by degrees, and a little furniture obtained. People recovered from their stupor and resumed their duties; but this palace was always inconvenient for the Court. This was a preparation for the miseries that these unfortunate princes had to experience, in nights spent in the cells of the Feuillants, in the torments of the Temple, and the horrors of the Conciergerie.

It is evident that I am far from censuring luxury and magnificence in a Sovereign; the sight must be an imposing one. But what sad reflexions are suggested to me at sight of the sumptuousness of the Tuileries, and the rich furniture of Bonaparte, in comparison with the nakedness of the rooms of Louis XVI., who, like him, was ruler over France. But the virtues of the latter and his ancestors, the remembrances of this rear-guard of the kings, made the chief distinction of his crown.

The chief part of the furniture of Louis XVI. at



the Tuileries consisted of great pieces of tapestry, rather intended, in the taste of the time, for covering the steps of an altar than to serve as hangings. The gildings had been arranged by Mignard and Coypel. There was no looking-glass anywhere. A small mirror had to be put on the King's toilet-table for him to dress himself.

The great hall of the pavilion in the Tuileries, now the Hall of the Marshals, was used for the hundred Swiss. This weak handful of men, already infected with the spirit of revolution, allowed themselves to be crushed by the troops of La Fayette, who took the posts and duties of the body-guards, and established themselves in the second hall. Every day one battalion was relieved by another, always dragging its two pieces of cannon behind it with as much noise as possible, and they were placed at each side of the entrance to the palace, the gunners standing by with lighted matches, not so much to defend the King as to frighten his friends, and even the foolish populace, who might at any moment rise in his favour. These officers of a day performed the services of the officers of the body-guards to the royal family; one day a banker of the Rue Vivienne would relieve an advocate from the Rue du Temple, or a grocer of the Faubourg Saint-Denis be relieved by a mason of the Quartier Saint-Jacques, or by a brigand from the Bastille, bringing his repulsive filth and vulgar cynicism to the Court. These apostles of equality for a long time refused to receive from the hands of the pages the trains of the princesses' robes, which they ought to have carried,

according to etiquette, on entering the King's room or the chapel. This duty, considered an honour by the first houses in the kingdom, was disdained by persons who, six months before, were at the feet of those whom they so despised.

La Fayette, very appropriately nicknamed Giles the First by the late Duke de Choiseul, came every day to confirm these fine fellows in their impudence. Followed by his staff, chiefly composed of persons of blemished reputation, he came to show off his sallow face and his large epaulets. The Mayor of Paris was not quite so often seen, the Academician Bailly, who, not being contented with a certain celebrity among astronomers, wished to become a Statesman all at once, and Governor of the Capital of France. Thus M. Bailly, nicknamed Coco in a newspaper, was as clever in astronomical calculations as he was foolish in politics. Intoxicated with his temporary greatness, he imprisoned and insulted his Sovereign. Afterwards he soon followed him to the scaffold, and it must be said he bore a horrible death and cruel agony with complete firmness and courage. The people, in a whim, caused the position of the instrument of his execution to be changed three times, and it was carried from the Place Louis XV. to the Champ de Mars, where he had proclaimed martial law, and ordered the patriots to be fired upon. He was awaiting death, chilled by a cold rain, when one of the executioners addressed him: "Bailly, you are trembling!" and he answered in these words, worthy of a follower of Zeno: "Yes, I am; but it is with cold." M. Bailly was a

tall thin man, with a very aquiline nose, and a long yellow face. His brother was master of the post-horses at Versailles, and was as short as the Mayor of Paris was tall and thin.

Louis XVI. occupied, at the Tuileries, a portion of the rooms now used by the Emperor Bonaparte, looking on the court, and some rooms to the garden side, where he passed his private hours. The rest of the first story was taken up by the state-rooms of the Queen. She had given up the ground-floor to her children, only retaining a few rooms, now used for the drawing-room and bedroom of Madame Bonaparte. The Paris guard having established themselves in the King's ante-chamber, it had been necessary to make a small one by taking a part of the hall of the nobles; a partition had also been put up in the Gallery of Diana, for a place for the King's billiard-table. And on Sunday the King dined in public in this gallery. To avoid a crush, the crowd came in through the King's chamber, and went out through the Pavilion of Flora.

When first the royal family were living at the Tuileries, they were obliged to go over one of the terraces above the arcades to go to the tribune in the chapel. The largest part of the attendants on duty were obliged to wait exposed to the weather all the time of mass, for there was no room in the tribune. Indeed, very often the Court had to carry umbrellas. At last a little wooden gallery was built; but before it was finished, every time that the King and his family went to

chapel they were stopped on the terrace by the crowd of people and concourse of spectators assembled in the garden, displaying their joy and enthusiasm for the illustrious and ill-fated family by continued applause. In general, the earlier part of the King's stay in Paris showed how much he was beloved by the people, and they were not yet exasperated or estranged by the intrigues of the factions and wicked. The sorrows and virtues of the royal family, and their courage during the fearful days of the 5th and 6th of October, had brought the volatile Parisians back to the affection for their Sovereign, natural to the French. Whenever the royal family was seen, it was followed by the acclamations of the people, until the intrigues of all parties contending for France and tearing her to pieces, again altered popular feeling by means of calumnies and base atrocities.

The King and his family took advantage of this short period of tranquillity to visit the institutions and establishments of Paris, and to walk in the Tuileries Gardens in the morning. They were not opened to the public till noon; before that time, special cards of admission were necessary. When we were taken by surprise by noon at a distance from the palace, the people crowded to the part where the King or any of the Princesses happened to be; and, I must say, not in any praise of the Parisians, but to show how much difficulty the revolutionists must have found in changing the spirit of the French people, that all we had to do was to form line behind the Prince; the respect still borne for him was the strongest

barrier that could be placed against the ardent curiosity of the multitude.

However, all this only lasted a few months. Then there was such a change in opinion that none of these noble sufferers could appear, even at the windows, without being insulted. Curiosity was sometimes so strong, and the crowd so great on Sundays, the only days when cards of admission to the Tuileries were not required, that we could hardly make our way through the rooms and staircases to reach the apartments where our station was. It was a grand field for pickpockets, so they made great practice there. I remember that a private person, who seemed to have suffered from their dexterity several times, one day played them a curious trick. He had put a little trap into his pocket; a rogue was caught, and, with horrible cries, he was forced to follow the person, who very coolly went on without turning round. The guard put a stop to the rogue's punishment by taking him before the Commissary of Police. I saw this adventure myself.

The King never returned to Versailles after he had gone to Paris. Once there was a sporting meet appointed for the old park of Clagny, under the walls of the town, which had escaped poaching and destruction, thanks to its being enclosed. The inhabitants of Versailles came thither in haste, the National Guard got under arms and arrived with drums beating. But Louis XVI., indignant at their ingratitude, turned his back on them, got on his horse, and departed for Saint-Cloud, where

he had been allowed to spend some time. This was the last occasion the unfortunate King went out sporting. The factious became more distrustful, and left him less liberty; and it was only thanks to his excellent constitution that he escaped any severe illness from so sedentary a life, when used to violent exercise.

## CHAPTER VI.

## LA FAYETTE.

THE infancy and youth of M. de La Fayette were surrounded with all that could flatter ambition, and conduce to pleasure. Early admitted to the first military grades, he dwelt with pleasure on the antiquity and splendour of his name. As long ago as 1421 there was a Marshal de La Fayette, who restored the glory of the French arms at Beauce, in Anjou, proving to the English that they were not invincible, and making preparation for the successes of Charles VII. If this military glory was not sufficient, he might point again to the Countess de La Fayette, who was the first person in France to produce romances, free from the affectation of Scudéri or La Calprenède, and who laid the foundation and the rules of that kind of writing. The fortune of M. de La Fayette was crowned by an illustrious alliance with the house of Noailles, equally influential for military advancement and court favour, and able to give scope for all his projects. His unquiet, restless, ambitious mind was not contented with the power of gaining the highest dignities in France



while yet young, but desired to anticipate them. He seized with avidity the career that was opened by the revolution in America, and went to Washington as the instrument of the noble but imprudent projects of Louis XVI., to gather laurels, and imbibe ideas, and afterwards return to disturb his country.

This was the position of M. de La Fayette, in 1786. He was seldom seen at Court. Silent and modest, he seemed to enjoy his glory within himself; but this simplicity was more haughty than the loudest boasting. It was the vanity of Diogenes showing through the holes in his cloak. His reputation and the zeal that had made him hurry to the New World to display his love of liberty gratuitously, caused him to be elected in turn to the Assembly of the Notables and to the States-General; he always showed a spirit factious and hypocritical at the same time. M. de Bouillé called him "a hero of romance, and a principal actor in the most criminal of conspiracies; he was none the less desirous of preserving the appearance of honour, probity, and want of interest, complacently hugging himself in the notion which he expressed in his favourite saying, that he had made a revolution in America, and would go and make one in Rome when he had finished that of France." Always manœuvring in danger, growing pale at the smallest obstacle, he never had the energy required to support himself; and there was every reason to foresee his fall if he ever encountered opposition.

The various parties hiding one behind the other,

and seemingly always agreed, were really only in concert on one point, the destruction of the Monarchy; no doubt, they had a very good notion of M. de La Fayette, and they thrust him into the general command of the Parisian Guards, on the day of the insurrection of the fourteenth of July. But fearing the consequences of such a disturbance, he would not make up his mind till the impulse had actually begun, and left all the responsibility of the first actions to a foolish man named the Marquis de la Salle, who was soon crushed under the burden, and gave up the post as soon as asked.

Confident in this first success, La Fayette threw off the mask on the fifth of October. Neither the sort of violence that he submitted to that day at the Hôtel de Ville, at Paris, nor his hypocritical slumber, could save him from contempt. Then, having got the King at Paris, he thought himself under no restraint and able to do without the other parties; he broke with the Republicans and with the Orleanists, over whom he obtained some small advantage, thus digging the precipice that was to be his destruction. But we will not anticipate.

The King's arrival at Paris made La Fayette triumphant for a time. He displayed himself everywhere at the head of a numerous staff, composed of ruined or dishonoured persons, and of some younger individuals, imbued with liberal principles that they had imported from America, without experience enough to estimate the consequences.

La Fayette came to the King's levée nearly every day, just at the time when the relief of the battalion

of the guard took place. His pale and expressionless countenance was hardly to be distinguished from his fair hair, worn without powder, so arranged as to represent studied disorder, as if to bear witness to the labours and fatigues of the hero. His enormous epaulets, like those worn by the Americans, distinguished him from the rest of the French army, and seemed an indication of the changes he proposed. His arrival at the Tuileries always caused a great noise among his foolish admirers, while we affected such contempt as not even to rise at his passing, an attention that was paid to the least remarkable persons at Court. La Fayette replied to this slight by a foolish laugh, that seemed to say that he thought himself too much above the vulgar not to be superior to these injuries, and that this contempt, far from annoying him, was a mark of his superiority. There was a Prince of Salm in his suite, a disgrace to his family, living in a luxury insulting to his poor creditors; a Duke d'Aumont, better known among the girls of Paris than in good company; a Courtaumer, a d'Ormesson, gone wild with the new notions. These four officers, called generals of the National Guard of Paris, took the place of the officers of the guards. Among the aides-de-camp were Gouvion, Cadignan, Romeuf, Verdière, Julien, and others, some with reputation gone, others furious at their wealth not making them the equals of the first houses in the kingdom, and only wishing to overturn one party in order to take their place.

On parade days, La Fayette rode a great white

horse that had been draughted from our riding-school, where he had been ridden by beginners, and was called the Novice. Like a good many others, the old jade was brought out of obscurity, and became very celebrated from carrying the illustrious general. It was nick-named Jean Leblanc, and gave rise to a thousand jokes.

The first attempts of M. de La Fayette with the army of the North had not been very felicitous, and there was a parody made of the fine piece of Mithridates,

“ At last, after two years, we meet again, Arbaces.”

in which the general, after relating his unfortunate defeat, like the King of Pontus, cries,

“ And I only owe my life, while all about me fly,  
To famous Jean Leblanc, who goes quicker than I.”

When I left the Court, M. de la Fayette was still there. He soon went off to the army, scared at the weakness of his own party and the power of his enemies, and the ill-success of his designs at the time of the King's flight. But he was far from finding safety there. Pursued by the Jacobins thirsting for his blood, he passed the frontier with his staff, and contrary to all rights of nations was arrested by the Emperor's troops. First, he was kept prisoner for several years by the King of Prussia, at Magdeburg; then when the money found on his officers was exhausted, they were all delivered over to the Emperor, and he put them into

vigorous captivity at Olmütz. This captivity gave occasion for Madame de La Fayette to show her devotion and courage. She was not dismayed by the dungeons of Olmütz any more than Madame de Lameth by those of Magdeburg. One buried herself to watch over her son, the other over her husband; and both these ladies showed the strength of duty and power of virtue. When M. de La Fayette was unhappy and oppressed, his faults were forgotten in pity and indignation at an evident violation in his person of the honour and confidence of warfare.

When La Fayette was set at liberty by the influence of General Bonaparte, at the time of the treaty of Campo Formio he retired to Hamburg, and reached it in the month of October, 1797. The day after his arrival a paper was put over his door with this inscription. "This is to give public information that M. de La Fayette will not receive company to-day till after noon, as it is his custom to sleep late on the 6th of October."

This must have been a cruel joke to the exile, since his troubles must have awakened some feelings of tenderness and honour in his breast.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CONFEDERACY OF 1790.

THERE were many periods during the first years of the Revolution when Louis XVI. might have recovered his authority, had he not continued to listen to the feeble counsels that had caused him to lose it. The Confederacy of 1790 seemed for a moment to have brought all hearts and minds back to him ; if he had taken advantage of this enthusiasm he would undoubtedly have recovered his liberty and power. But instead of seizing the opportunity there was only a quantity of mistakes and errors, as in many other cases.

The National Assembly, under the pretext of celebrating the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille and the foundation of liberty, had made a decree summoning deputations of National Guards, and of the land and sea forces, to Paris, so as to draw closer the bonds of union of citizens. Each faction was in hopes of having the Federals at their orders by their influence in these various bodies, and to make use of them to strike a grand blow for their own benefit. The Duke of Orleans had been six months in England, and came back for this great day. Uneasiness and

alarm were so general in Paris that many persons in their fear left the city, expecting to see the various factions come to blows. But on this occasion the deputies were carefully chosen among the wealthy classes, and all these Federals were at once gained over to the royal family at the sight of their virtues and sorrows, being already well inclined that way.

The week before the Federation was marked by disorder and licence, such as only times of disturbance can produce. Three thousand workmen were employed in the Champ de Mars in building an immense amphitheatre with steps of earth capable of holding two hundred thousand spectators. A lawless populace spread themselves through the streets under excuse of helping the workmen, and forced peaceable citizens to go to the amphitheatre with tools. Monks and nuns vowed to retirement were not exempt from these prosecutions. Convents were broken open to the sound of military music. The Carthusians and Benedictines were torn from their studies, dragged to the work, forced to handle the pick, to swill and drink healths with the soldiers and change their cowls for the caps of sappers and plumes of grenadiers, to cry *Vive la nation* and to sing *Ca ira*. These famous lines, the signal of uproar, the death song of so many wretches, had at first been sung by the girls of the Palais Royal, to some very free words, the burden of which was soon changed to "*Les aristocrats à la lanterne*," and became the signal for massacre and pillage.

M. de La Fayette came to the Champ de Mars



every evening to sing this melody,\* and seemed himself to excite and authorise the disturbance. I had been away from Paris for some weeks, and on my return was much surprised to meet groups of elegant women in all the streets, bearing pick and shovel, to work at the preparations for the feast. Several went there from party spirit; others under the compulsion of fear.

At last came the famous day for the Federation; but Heaven was averse to the ceremony, and sent a real deluge of rain for three whole days. All Paris hurried to the Champ de Mars with morning dawn. As no women were admitted unless dressed in white with tricoloured ribbons, and carriages could not pass, they arrived in an indescribable condition. All the enormous company of Federals, of authorities, and the National Assembly met at four in the morning at the place where the Bastille had stood, thence the interminable procession found its way by the Boulevards and the Place Louis XV., entering the Champ de Mars by a bridge of boats constructed close to the extremity of the Champs Elysées; all this company drenched with rain for ten consecutive hours presented a pitiable appearance, very amusing to the people, who had no respect for their representatives.

A great pavilion had been erected for the King in front of the Military School, with the King's seat beneath it, and at its side a chair for the President

\* This report is founded on hearsay, and generally all that relates to M. de La Fayette, must be considered by the reader by the light of his knowledge of the prejudices of those times.

of the National Assembly, the Marquis de Bonnay. Behind there was a tribune for the Royal Family, and on each side two long galleries for the deputies and the diplomatic body.

The King would not join the company, or had been deterred. It was a great mistake; as the more he was seen by the Federals the more would they have become attached to his person. It had been arranged that he should proceed to the Military School in a carriage by the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and take his seat on the throne at the same moment as the National Assembly were mounting the high steps that led to it. Accordingly, an aide-de-camp of La Fayette was to come and give information when the deputies entered the Champ de Mars. It had been calculated that the time taken in crossing it would be enough for the Court to make its way from the Tuileries to the Military School. The King and all his suite were ready at eight in the morning; the carriages, to the number of twenty-two, all collected in the yard. We waited nearly an hour for the aide-de-camp, the progress was so slow; then we mounted, and went quickly to the Champ de Mars, amid torrents of rain.

The King retired into a room for a short time, and I went under the gallery, curious to see the sight, and I must say, not inclined to find anything beautiful in it. But I could not prevent myself being struck with the splendid spectacle offered to my view. An immense crowd made the whole vast enclosure ring with repeated acclamations; all the

deputations drawn up in line, with their colours floating in the air, were really a noble sight. In the midst was raised a magnificent altar on a hillock, surrounded with antique vases, giving forth clouds of perfumed vapour. A number of clergy crowned the crowd of warriors; at their feet stood above five hundred drums and as many other instruments awaited the signal to mark the celebration of the Mysteries, and fling wide the praises of the God of Armies, while a force of artillery, placed on the banks of the Seine, were to inform the whole country of the moment of the ceremony.

The Federals, waiting for it to begin, quitted their ranks, and collected in immense masses to the sound of thousands of cries of Long live the King. The Sovereign soon took his place on the throne. The crowd hastened to have a nearer look at him; the cries and clapping of hands were redoubled with fresh ardour, and only stopped to begin again. The King had never been the object of such touching transports of affection during the happiest events of his reign. One voice is raised with a cry for the nation. It is received with repeated groans, and the patriot is forced to make his escape in a hurry from the disgraceful fate they are preparing for him. There are shouts of like enthusiasm for the Queen and the Dauphin. Then the Queen raises her son in her arms. He replies to the people with gracious smiles and infantine salutations, with that sweet face already wearing the impress of woe at such a tender age. But the rain chills him, his mother wraps him in her shawl,

and this picture of maternal love in the grandeur and pomp of kings redoubles the transports of the multitude. All the people are moved, and shed tears. For some hours Louis XVI. again took his place as the idol of his subjects and master of his empire. The factions endeavoured to escape from the remorse that pursued them; the Left side of the National Assembly, ashamed to witness the failure of their sinister plans, took refuge with their head, the Duke of Orleans, at the end of the tribune. Necker looked out from behind a rent in the cloth, while at the foot of the throne stood the most faithful friends of the Monarchy; Cazales, the eloquent Abbé Maury, the brave Viscount de Mirabeau, the last of French knights.

During these demonstrations of affection, the deputation of troops of the line entered the Champ de Mars. Placed by the river, at a distance from their King, they strove in vain to see him; his perfidious advisers, instead of making him traverse the whole plain on horseback, had placed him apart under a pavilion where those brave warriors, kept in their places by the old French countersign of duty, tried in vain to fix their eyes upon him; and so the army was alienated by wicked design. All the honour of the feast descended on M. de La Fayette as he crossed the plain on his great white horse, surrounded by his brilliant staff, and seeking for homage that was not given to him on that occasion.

All at once a very old officer issued from the ranks of the infantry of the line. He crossed the Champ de Mars; woe seemed to have left its mark

upon his bald forehead; he mounted the steps of the throne slowly, in a respectful attitude, and, kneeling on one knee, presented a petition to the King. It was received, and the old man retired in the same posture. It may well be supposed that a single request, made under such circumstances, was not refused. The officer had hardly regained his post, when an aide-de-camp was sent with a favourable answer. The spectators perceived it, and redoubled their acclamations. I never heard the officer's name or his regiment; but his uniform was white, with yellow facings and lace.

At last all the company had come and taken their seats, mass was begun at five o'clock. A number of subordinates, clothed in white, stood around the steps of the altar. At their head stood a man who was the disgrace of the French clergy, the Bishop of Autun, Talleyrand de Périgord. He had already betrayed his King, and would soon deny his God, throw off his episcopal duties, and stand almost alone of the bishops of the ancient Gallic church, in casting off the pontifical authority. Miserable effects of forcing a vocation. Between the salvoes of artillery, a furious wind carried the sacred canticles to the far ends of the plain. At the voice of the Lord's Minister, a hundred thousand soldiers bent the knee, and paid homage to the Creator.

After the Gospel the priest turned, M. de La Fayette ascended the steps of the altar, and took the oath of fidelity to the constitution, the law, and the King; all the deputations were held to have repeated

the oath at the same moment, and if all did not swear, they made most horrible shouts. M. de La Fayette mounted his horse again, and went to the King. Then the President of the National Assembly made his oath, and turned to the King, who, in a loud voice, promised to maintain a constitution that was scarcely hatched from the brains of some of the factions. Redoubled cries of Long live the King proclaimed the moment, and gave the signal for the artillery to announce it to the whole capital. Mass came to an end after six in the evening, the deputations passed before the King, and we got back to the Tuileries at half-past seven.

A great feast for the Federals had been prepared in the castle of La Muette, in the Bois-de-Boulogne, but the chief part of them preferred to go to rest, after being rained on for fifteen or sixteen hours. The King did not appear at it, I do not know why. It was again M. de La Fayette who went in search of applause. The city of Paris had taken care to have a very good repast for the King laid out at the Military School, and refreshments for his household. After taking advantage of it, I was in the tribune, when a deputy, whom I knew, the Marquis de Foucault de l'Ardimalie, begged me to get him a bit of bread; they all had been fasting ever since the previous night, as they had left their houses at three in the morning, and could not leave their places. I ran to the table, seized a chicken by the legs, put a loaf under my arm, a bottle of wine in each pocket, and carried my repast to my friend and



his neighbours—all royalists like himself. As soon as this was seen, everybody was seen begging for bread; I called to my comrades, we went twenty times to the table and supported the friends of royalty, while the left side implored our pity in vain, and got nothing but some little rolls that we threw at their heads, and that they quarrelled over. I only relate this to show how excessive was party-spirit in these unhappy times.

All the Federals were entertained for a week, but only with public balls. The theatres were open to them. On the 18th, there was a general illumination, very good at a time when this sort of splendour was more uncommon. At last, all the Federal deputies returned to their country, and again left the field open to the factions. Some remained at Paris to protect the King, but without a rallying point, the best intentions remained ineffectual, as always happened in the Revolution.

The day before the Federation, the King had seen all the deputations defile beneath the vestibule at the Tuileries. The leaders gave him a list of names of all the Federals; and all these provincials returned home delighted, perfectly persuaded that they were known to the King.

I cannot relate all symptoms of devotion to the royal cause that we were witnesses to during this week. The Bretons, carried away by their enthusiasm, laid their swords at the King's feet, swearing to defend him; and showed their attachment much more by their tears than by their words.

The troops of the line were reviewed at the



bridge of Neuilly, veterans were seen there, several of whom wore the double decoration; and this appeared as if they had been more than forty-eight years' in the service. On another occasion, I saw the oldest of the French actual soldiers, and even of the men who had served, presented to the King. He was a soldier of the infantry of Touraine, named Jean Thurel. He had enlisted in 1716, so when he was presented to the king in 1789 he had been seventy-two years in the army, and had three medals. His ignorance had prevented his getting above the rank of corporal. He died in 1807 at Tours, where he had retired as a veteran, decorated with the eagle of the legion of honour, at the age of one hundred and eight years, with ninety-two of service.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH OF FEBRUARY.

AS soon as the heads of the Revolution saw that the monarchical party was resuming a little of its influence, they endeavoured to form fresh intrigues so as to discredit or to destroy it by terror.

After the Confederation, the love of the people for the King had resumed strength. His stay at Saint-Cloud, in the summer, had accustomed the people of Paris to see him leave the capital, not returning till the Sunday. He might have taken advantage of this to escape and endeavour to recover his power. The resolution was taken to make him odious by fresh calumnious imputations, and so to awaken the hatred of the people, and drive away several of his faithful servants.

For several days a report had been intentionally circulated that a popular movement was being organized at Paris; that the people were going to the Tuileries, and that the King's safety would be compromised. In consequence, all the friends of the King were invited by clandestine information to go to the palace well armed, and ready to die for the good cause. They even went so far as to cause

notes in this style to be mysteriously distributed in the coffee-houses and public places. It was only a snare laid for the simplicity of the Royalists.

On the 28th of February, 1791, the Faubourg Saint Antoine, led by the brewer Santerre, went to Vincennes to demolish the old dungeon, an old State prison, that report said was being repaired. M. de La Fayette had the Assembly sounded, collected some battalions of the most factious, and about mid-day went to disperse this collection; and a report was more pertinaciously spread that on his return the populace would go the Tuileries.

In consequence of this movement, and in conformity with the plan adopted every time that the like occurrence had taken place, all who were attached to the Court by duty or inclination went to the palace after dinner, not as the anarchical papers asserted, with their hair in rolls, and in black coats, as a rallying sign, but in the decent costume for attendance at Court, where they certainly would not have dared to present themselves otherwise. Several persons had pistols in their pockets, because in these times of disturbance and calamity they were compelled to use this precaution.

M. de La Fayette, having scattered the crowd at Vincennes and arrested some sixty of the most mutinous, returned at night-fall to the Tuileries, where it was said an army of royalists was collected. He brought his battalions and artillery with him, a useless and imprudent measure. It was said that a person, name unknown, had endeavoured to penetrate to the queen, that a dagger of extraordinary

form had been seen under his coat, and that he had been arrested. The report spreading with rapidity that a conspiracy was formed against the safety of the people, and that the King was surrounded by a liberticide association called the Band of Knights of the Dagger, minds became inflamed, and La Fayette reached the palace with his army full of these notions.

The name of the person arrested was La Tombelle. He held a small place at Court, and perhaps his enthusiasm had made him adopt this kind of defensive weapon, or possibly he was himself the instrument of the movement in preparation, though it was asserted that he had carried this dagger for a long time. Any way, it is a fact that no more account was taken of this person, and he was neither convicted nor acquitted.

When M. de La Fayette came to the palace, he found about two hundred people, who usually came there on Sunday, and even on other days as well. These were the conspirators whose murderous projects were to overturn the edifice of liberty and reduce Paris, after murdering the garrison. What a wonderful army would these two hundred gentlemen have made, persons of all ages, and with no arms but their swords! This was the object of M. de La Fayette's terror. He addressed himself to the King, and making use of his usual means of producing alarm, said that he could not answer for the safety of the palace, nor say to what excesses the people might work themselves up, unless he gave orders for this little assembly to disperse and lay down their arms.

Louis XVI. came into his bed-chamber, thanked all his friends for the zeal they had shown in his defence, and convinced, as he said, that he ran no risk, he begged of them to leave their weapons with names attached in his wardrobe, adding that the next day, when the people were quiet, the Duke de Villequier should give them back to the owners on application. All hastened to obey the King's desire; they fastened their names to their pistols, and put them in a drawer in the wardrobe.

When this was settled and finished, the cowardly rogue La Fayette again represented that as the battalions had not been witnesses of the disarmament, they would not feel sure that it had taken place unless they saw the weapons carried to Gouvion, Major-General of the Paris Guard. The King gave his consent; the pistols were placed in a box that was his property; but on reaching the guard-room La Fayette mounted on a stool and made a speech to the factions, proving to them the reality of the conspiracy by the arms he had just captured, and without saying that he was in possession of them through the King's confidence, he delivered his trust to his satellites, and they immediately pillaged it.

La Fayette retired after this grand exploit, and left a portion of his troops in the courts, engaged in breaking those weapons or firing them off. The noise was still going on when I returned to the palace about eleven o'clock for the King's retiring. Louis XVI., always master of himself, conversed as usual, and showed no anger except with the

Duke de Liancourt, a marked partisan of the left side of the Assembly, who called his attention to the continuance of the noise in the courts.

When the arms had been given up, several persons desired to take their leave. The Duke de Piennes and another went out by the guard-room door and the grand staircase. They had hardly got outside when we heard fearful shouts and tumult; the doors were opened and shut hastily, and we saw M. de Piennes come in again disordered and bruised all over. The National Guards rushed at him the moment they saw him, and would have dashed out his brains had he not gone in again immediately. It was very perplexing how to get away. All the doors were guarded by the soldiers of La Fayette. After much running backwards and forwards, the chiefs of the band got permission for us to go away; but though we had this safe-conduct, we were obliged to pass through this crowd of madmen, under blows from their muskets, stripes and insults. The old Marshal de Mailly, being not very active, was one who received most injury notwithstanding his age. We all went home indignant at the perfidious conduct of M. de La Fayette.

We occupied a house situated on the spot where an opening has now been made for the Rue . . . . . At eleven o'clock I returned to the palace. All was quiet within. But the next day the entrance cards were again required, and it was very difficult to get in.

This was the famous conspiracy of the Knights of the Dagger. If anyone had made a plan and succeeded



in it, it was M de La Fayette. This event brought back suspicion on the King, and assisted to close his prison bonds. There could no longer be any doubt of what the intentions were when, on the 19th April following, as the King was starting for a journey to Saint-Cloud, these same battalions stopped him in the court of the Tuileries, and after insulting him in his carriage for three hours, and ill-treating all his attendants, compelled him to remain in the palace.

The affair of the 28th of February alarmed a great many of the King's faithful subjects, and they made their escape. The most courageous remained, and were thenceforth a mark for popular fury. La Fayette might have foreseen that the King would attempt to escape under the provocation of so many insults, and this was a pretext for stricter surveillance.

This was the last scene I was witness of at Court, as I left it six weeks afterwards.

A little while before my departure, as I was going one morning through the Rue Montmartre, near the Rue Tiquetonne, a man took me by the collar and asked me a quantity of questions about my uniform, and the King and Queen. A crowd was attracted. I was not strong enough to get away from the man, and heard murmured round me the words, aristocrat, royalist, and was beginning to be very anxious for my safety, when a very strong man pushed my enemy away, and gave me time to escape. We were continually exposed to such scenes, especially at the play. Two of my comrades, MM. de La-



rogue and Swinburn, were assaulted, on leaving the Vaudeville Theatre, in the Rue de Chartres. Laroque made his escape, but Swinburn was dragged into the gutter, and severely wounded in the head. When I presently mention the King's flight, I shall have occasion to show that all my comrades ran the same risks. On the 10th August, two only were left in the palace at the time of the attack. They were MM. de Sarazin and Boisfremont. They had great difficulty in making their escape by disguising themselves as cooks' boys. The others had gone to the home of our apothecary, M. Le Houx de Clermont, Rue Saint-Honoré, near the Palais Royal, before the disturbance began, and this excellent man preserved them from the fury of the populace at the risk of his life and property.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE KING'S FLIGHT.

WITHOUT having been a witness to the memorable event of the Revolution, I saw the preparations for it, and I heard so many details of it from eye-witnesses that I can give some authentic details of it.

Louis XVI. had been a long time making preparations for escaping by flight from the dangers and outrages he was daily exposed to. At the end of the year 1790, he had communicated his intention to the Marquis de Bouillé, who was commanding in Lorraine, whither the King desired to direct his flight; and the last winter I was at Paris, I often saw the Count de Fersen, Colonel of the Royal Swedish regiment, at the house of the Baroness de Stegleman and her daughter, the Baroness de Korf, who lent their names and passports to the illustrious fugitives.

It is impossible not to suppose that such a long time of preparation and multiplication of precautions contributed to the discovery of the King's projects by M. de La Fayette. It is certain that at the moment they started, as the Queen asserted in

her declaration, La Fayette was on the Place Carrousel, and his hypocritical face, illumined with malignant satisfaction, had attracted the attention of Madame Royale the day before, so that she made her parents notice it. Baillon, one of the aides-de-camp of La Fayette, was at Châlons before the King. Gouvion, Major-General of the Guard of Paris, not trusting the discretion of the sentry, remained all night in the guard-room of the door by which the King was to go out, and his conduct might have been called in question, as he was in charge of the guard at the Tuileries, but was justified by La Fayette, who took all the responsibility upon himself at the bar of the Assembly. La Fayette was informed of all by a maid of the Queen's. But he chose to allow the King to get away from Paris, that his return might be the more overwhelming, and his capture reflect the more credit. What were his ulterior objects no one can divine ; but it is possible that he hoped to proclaim a forfeiture, and have the Dauphin crowned King, and himself nominated Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, for he had long quarrelled with the Duke of Orleans, and no longer worked for that party. But he did not know that Voidel, President of the Committee of Inquiry, and a devoted Orleanist, had also gained over one of the Queen's maids, and was equally well informed.

Notwithstanding the precautions of M. de La Fayette, the King would have got away but for his want of energy, the mistakes of the officers employed under M. de Bouillé and of the General him-

self, who endeavoured to throw the blame on M. de Choiseul-Stainville, colonel of the regiment of Royal Dragoons, for Baillon either had been unable, or had not thought it his duty to arrest him at Châlons. The projects of La Fayette were none the less defeated, though the King was arrested.

I will pass no opinion on the conduct of the officers of the army of M. de Bouillé, first because I was not a witness, secondly because, if they led their men badly, it was from want of knowledge and not from want of zeal or courage.

About the middle of June the King arranged with M. de Bouillé to start on the 19th, but afterwards deferred his departure till midnight on the next day. This delay was a first mistake, because it destroyed the plans and precautions that were prepared. Later, little special interests would not give way to the necessities of their superior. Madame de Tourzel, in charge of the Dauphin, refused to abandon her privilege or be separated from the royal infant. M. de Fersen, one of the directors of the project, found the carriages did not dare to remain in Paris. The Baroness Korf, whose name the Queen assumed, was obliged to go away to escape the fury of the populace. Madame Sullivan, mistress of the Count Fersen, chose to follow her lover; besides these, several other connections rendered a number of persons acquainted with the important secret.

Madame Korf, Russian born, had got her passport for Frankfort from the Foreign Office through her ambassador, M. de Simolin. She handed it to

Count Fersen, and he gave it to the Queen. M. de Simolin was persuaded to obtain another from M. de Montmorin, under the pretext that the first had fallen into the fire. There could be no suspicion that Madame de Stegleman and her daughter were acquainted with the Queen, as they lived in so much retirement; besides, the Minister, who certainly would not have approved of the King's intention, would have been very far from betraying him; for if his mind was crooked his heart was straight. The carriage had also been ordered in the name of Madame Korf. Suspicions might have arisen actually from the kind of carriage; for as the Royal Family would not be divided from the King, and Madame de Tourzel persisted in her determination to be of the party, a very large carriage was necessary, and had been fitted up with conveniences that must attract attention. It was puce-coloured, with a great seat, in the German fashion, where the three body-guards to go with the King were to be placed, and, by one of the fatalities attending this unfortunate journey, this seat was uncovered.

On Monday the 20th of June the King went to bed as usual. He said but little, but though apparently calm, he was not master enough of his agitation to refrain from going to the window several times, to watch the weather and look for the darkness that was so desirable. This was the only thing of any significance that could be remembered next day in going over the circumstances. When everybody had gone, the King put on his travelling dress, and caused the Queen to be told to wake

the children. Then they went out in several divisions by an exit from the King's apartments leading to a little stair at the end of the covered gallery, over the garden on the side to the river. At the bottom of this stair was a door into the wardrobe of the apartments of M. de Villequier, who had left Paris. The door of these apartments was on the ground-floor opening into the Court of the Princes, for the great Court of the Tuileries was then divided into three, and enclosed by a wall and buildings, with three great wooden gates instead of the iron railing now there. The royal family went out by the door near the gallery.

At this moment they saw M. de La Fayette cross the Place du Carrousel twice in his carriage, giving cause for suspicion.

The royal family met and got into a carriage waiting on the quay, went by the Place Louis XV. and the Boulevards to the Rue de Bondy where the travelling carriage was waiting, with MM. de Maldan, de Moustiers, and Valory, the three bodyguards who were to attend on the king, and Mesdames Brunier first bed-chamber lady to Madame Royale, and Neuville to the Dauphin. These two women were in a post-chaise.

Fatality, imprudence, and want of precaution, contrived to cause the failure of this unfortunate journey. The King was recognised several times, among others at Châlons. But the post-master was an honest man, and kept the secret. But the person at Sainte-Menehould, the wretch Drouet, was not so considerate. But feeling he was power-



less from the presence of a picquet of the Royal German regiment, he sent his son by a cross-road to give information at Varennes, where the King was stopped at half-past eleven at night, on Tuesday the 21st June. This was the last point of danger, the troops of M. de Bouillé were a little further on. And so with a little more time or firmness, Louis XVI. would have been saved.

Heaven always displays its justice sooner or later, and has already punished these unhappy cities. In 1792, the army of the King of Prussia penetrated into this country, and greatly ill-treated the inhabitants. Most of those who had taken a part in stopping the King were arrested; but Drouet was not there. It was not till a year afterwards that he was captured by the Austrians in a sortie of the garrison of Maubeuge, where he was as a deputy of the Convention. He was taken to Austria, and after three years of severe imprisonment, returned to France to hatch new conspiracies for the establishment of the Reign of Terror. After a long criminal trial he is now left to the remembrance of his infamy, his obscurity, and the execration of all honest men. The King's departure was published in Paris on the Tuesday, about seven in the morning. The first body-servant, who was in the secret, as he slept in the King's room, sent information to the keeper of the seals, Duport du Tertre, and sent him the declaration that the King had left when he went away. This unexpected news was soon spread over all Paris; there was general consternation, and



several mobs placed the lives of citizens in danger. Everything that bore the name or cipher of the King was torn down; even the sign-boards were not spared. M. de La Fayette, on horseback, followed by his aides-de-camp, passed through the streets, endeavouring to calm the people, and promising the King's speedy return through his measures.

As soon as the pages received the information, seeing the danger they ran in their house, so near the Tuileries, whither the crowds were gathering, they left Paris singly to return to Versailles. MM. de Bourgogne and de Boucher, as they crossed the Champs Elysées, were arrested by a detachment of the barrier-guard that was bringing back two of their comrades, MM. Douarin and Cantwell. They were led to the mayor's office, then in the Rue des Capucines. After being there interrogated, they were placed in two hired carriages, and taken to the Hôtel de Ville, to the Committee of Inquiry. Being stopped opposite to the Palais Royal, they would have been murdered but for the brave Le Houx de Clermont, apothecary to the stable establishment, who exposed his life to save them. The first carriage was again stopped in the Rue de La Ferronnière. The rabble opened the door, and seized hold of M. de Bourgogne, who was very small and weak; but M. de Boucher kept hold of him by main force, and gave the National Guard time to come; so they were saved, though this force was composed of wretches who said they had only freed them in hopes of soon seeing them hanged in the Place de Grève. At last,

after several examinations in the Hôtel de Ville, it was evident that these young men could not know the King's secrets, and they were set at liberty at eleven at night, after fifteen hours of anxiety and danger.

It was on Saturday, the 25th, that Louis XVI. and his unhappy family reached the Tuileries about three o'clock. The crowd was enormous. La Fayette went about the garden beseeching the people to be quiet, and advising them to show their indignation by keeping their hats on when the King arrived. This piece of spite, and the savage proposals of the Jacobins, ought to have caused apprehensions of the greatest excesses. The carriage arrived at last. On the seat were the three body-guards with their hands tied, exposed to the abuse of the populace. The King and Queen were inside with Barnave, who held the Dauphin on his knee. Sitting backwards was Pétion between the two Princesses. Madame de Tourzel followed in the carriage of Latour Maubourg. These three deputies of the National Assembly had been sent to protect the King's return, and the virtues, courage, and patience of the unfortunate family made such an impression on the young deputy Barnave, who, though of a pleasant face and figure, had deservedly received the name of Tiger on account of his sanguinary opinions, that he became entirely changed and was one of the first to demand the King's restoration. This change was the cause of his being led to the scaffold, where he expiated his former errors.

The comfort of the royal family at being able to

escape from popular fury after a journey of five hours in excessive heat, amid so many dangers, anxieties, and agonies, may be imagined. The Tuileries was not reached without difficulty. They found their faithful friends in tears, and with anxious hearts. The King was immediately separated from his wife and children, and for several days they never met but at the time of mass, amid a numerous guard and hostile spectators. They could only just ask each other how they were. All those who had gone with the King, or assisted his escape, were imprisoned. Madame de Tourzel, the maids, the three body-guards, the Duke de Choiseul, M. Charles de Damas, M. de Gognelas, &c., were to be tried before the High Court of the nation, established at Orleans; but the Royalist party having gained a majority in the National Assembly in a violent debate on the forfeiture, a pretence of a Constitution was hastily compiled and laid before the King on the 4th September. He came himself on the 14th to accept it in the National Assembly, and to undergo fresh humiliations. He was obliged to leave off his blue ribbon, and found the President Thouret seated in an arm-chair like his, with his legs crossed, not rising to address him. The only thing that could repay the King for so much pain was a pardon granted to those who had favoured his escape, or made any attempts to restore his power. His acceptance of the constitution gave him a little liberty, but there soon were fresh plots, more wicked and better contrived, that finally ex-

cavated the abyss; and the King, the Monarchy,  
and the glory of France fell into it together.

I will not paint the tumult at the flood,  
How Paris' streets were deluges of blood,  
The son upon his father's body lying,  
Brother and sister, child and mother dying,  
Husband and wife beneath their roof on fire,  
While infants in their cradles crushed expire,  
Such are the fruits of human fury dire.

VOLTAIRE.—*Henriade*.

THE END.

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